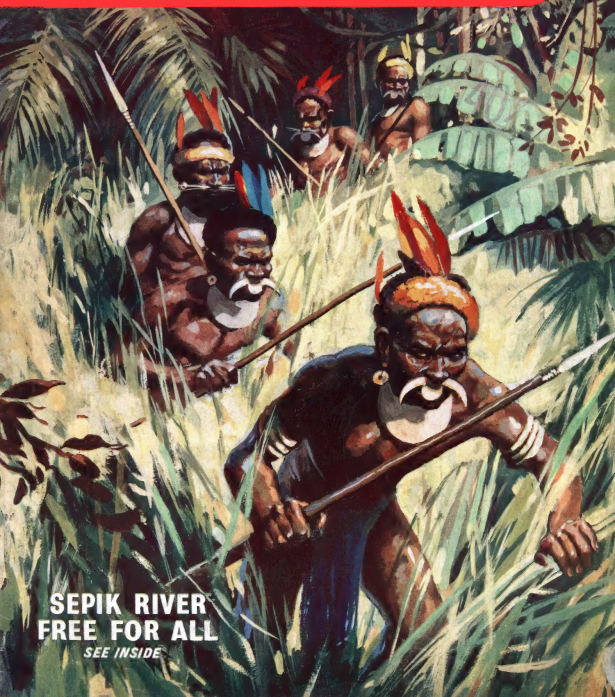


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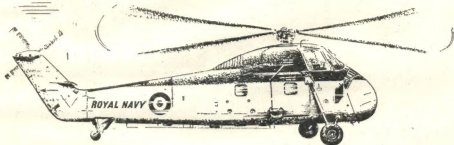
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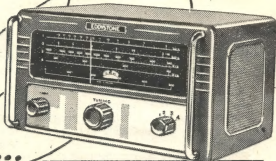
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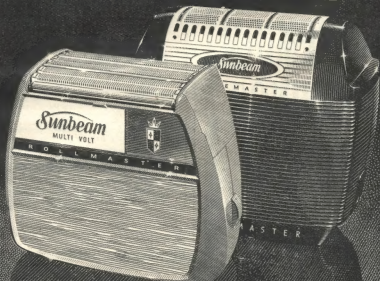


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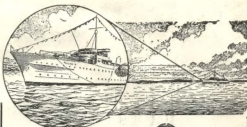
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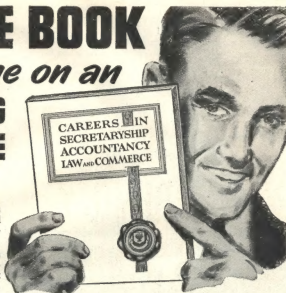


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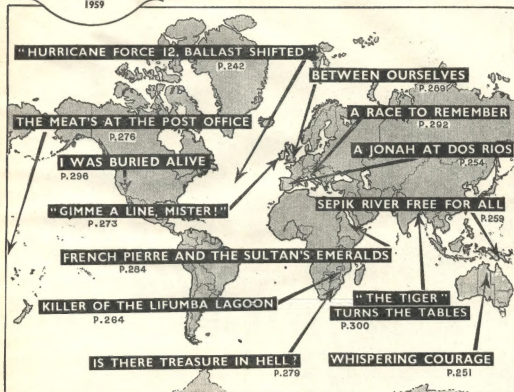
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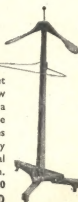
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HURRICANE

Penang and the four-masted
Ponape, she made them both

seem absurdly small.

That voyage started under an evil star. She was almost ready for sea—or so we thought—when first I went aboard. It was bitterly cold, and we were thinking that the sooner we got under way, the better; but trouble lay ahead.

On arrival from Ireland, about a month previously, she had been loaded with additional quantities of ballast, in the form of large lumps of stone from an adjoining gravestone yard, for the long passage to Australia. Nobody had suspected that this would cause any harm.

We had bent the last sails in the icy blast of an increasing gale, and turned in on a freezing night with the wind whining in the spars overhead. In spite of the raging gale the vessel seemed strangely inert. Even when alongside, a ship should show some movement in such a force of wind. The truth was not apparent until the day came to sail.

The company's tug, the wooden *Johanna*, was made fast ahead, and we cast off from the shore. The owner, Captain Gustaf Erikson, was in the tug, and we were delighted at the thought of leaving so cold and desolate a place; but the efforts were in vain.

The *Johanna* pulled to the limit of her power, which was not great. Nothing happened. We set a few headsails to help our ship get started, but the *Moshulu* would not budge. It was most disheartening.

Erikson came aboard to superintend opera-

At the time of this episode, the *Moshulu* was the biggest sailing ship afloat. A huge, four-masted vessel, it was easy to believe that she set over an acre of canvas to the winds and that, for annual replacement, she needed some two tons of manila rope and cordage (altogether fifteen miles in length) and a ton and a quarter of wire rope.

To the lay observer, she might have looked rather like the ill-fated *Pamir*. She had the same midship deck and general rigging plan. The difference lay essentially in her greater size, this effect being enhanced by her masts and spars being painted white, and by her very short poop.

I had joined her at Nystad, a tiny port on the mainland of Finland. She was the largest ship the harbour had ever accommodated, and she towered above both the buildings and the other ships. Lying astern of the three-masted

By ALEX A. HURST



FORCE 12. BALLAST SHIFTED

The voyage of the great square-rigger seemed ill-fated from the start. But the earlier misfortunes were as nothing to the dire straits in which she and her crew found themselves when they reached mid-Atlantic. The author was aboard her at the time, and his account of that battle for survival is a wonderfully vivid and clear piece of descriptive writing.

tions. We were in no danger, but the extra three-hundred tons of gravestone material had left the ship sitting firmly and securely on the mud and stones at the bottom of the harbour. There are no tides in the Baltic, but the water-level varies slightly with the atmospheric pressure, and was unlikely to rise before the spring.

We attempted various methods of getting her off. We heaved endlessly on wires led to a promontory nearby; we hoisted staysails, and sometimes the tug hauled away. At intervals, all three were tried together, but it was useless. The great sailing ship would not move a fraction of an inch.

So we continued for several days. Once, the *Johanna* was sent off to aid the *Ponape*, which had sailed the previous day, and was anchored off a dangerous lee-shore to the north of the Åland Islands.

It was clear that she could do no more for us. There were loud murmurings that a "proper" (more powerful) tug should be summoned from one of the bigger ports to help us out of our predicament, before we became frozen in for the Baltic winter, which was nearly upon us.

The *Johanna* left so suddenly, and with so little thought, that her mast fouled one of our breast wires attached to the promontory, and she heeled right over. Fortunately, someone saw what was happening and cast off the wire,

just as the miserable craft was on the point of capsizing.

I believe that the owner was very reluctant to enlist outside help, for economy was his watch-word; but finally, there was no alternative. Barges were brought alongside, we rigged discharging gear, and went down into the hold to cast-off all the lashings on the ballast, and discharge that troublesome three-hundred tons.

Now came the gamut of heaving and towing all over again. To our relief,

the ship came off her resting place, and we moored her a short way off the quay; then we had the doubtful pleasure of re-stowing all those gravestone blocks. Even that was not the last we saw of them before they were finally thrown overboard at our loading port in Australia.

All this had occupied many days. We were starting late, and had worked incredibly long hours in very cold conditions, and were having only the poorest of food.

Most of the time, a gale or very strong wind had whistled about our freezing ears.

It was a great moment when we passed our line to the *Johanna* for a second attempt, and started to swing round for the channel to the harbour mouth. This was somewhat tortuous, and involved a tow of rather less than half-a-mile, almost across the wind, before turning into the main channel out to sea.

As soon as we were aweigh, we ran up the jibs and staysails. The puny tug was towing ahead, but out on the weather bow, as we were making quite a lot of leeway in all that wind.

When it came to the ninety-degree turn to starboard, we were making such speed that the wretched craft was unable to cross our bow without being run down. We, for our part,

could not bear round, since the tug was acting as a brake; nor would it have been safe to have attempted to sail so great a ship through the twisting fairway in half a gale with no tug at all. So we could not slip her.

It was a moment for prompt action. The staysails and jibs were hauled down, and both anchors were let go in short order. There was a dreadful moment of suspense while we waited to see if they held. They did, but, as the ship brought up head to wind, her stern swung round in a great circle, and there was a ghastly, grinding sound right beneath us. Her after part was now out of the channel, and had lodged itself on one of the many outcrops of rock from a nearby island.

COLLISION COURSE

We had progressed, roughly, a quarter of a mile, and it was infuriating, that we could not tell how much damage we had sustained. The carpenter and donkeyman, together with the mate, made a quick survey and we learnt that, fortunately, there did not seem to be any major damage to the hull.

Now the whole circus had to start all over again. By taking wires off to an islet which was in a suitable direction, if not as close as we might have wished, we managed to heave her off next morning—with the *Johanna's* rather dubious assistance.

Once again we headed for the sea. The wind was piping up again, and the big wind-jammer yawed and swung astern of her tug, which was barely able to hold her on course. Standing aft, we looked almost vertically down on some of the rocks at the edge of the narrow fairway and, in calmer weather, I swear that I could have spat upon them. It was sheer luck that we did not repeat the performance of the previous day.

With no little relief, we dropped the pilot and, under easy sail, stormed past the wretched *Johanna*, which was lifting her whole stem and showing half her keel to the long swell, while she rolled both rails under, and headed seawards at some nine knots.

Inspection in dry-dock at Copenhagen revealed that we had escaped lightly from the mishaps upon sailing and, in a day or two, we joined another four-master in the roads to await a fair wind.

In due course it came, and both ships went scudding on their way, showing a clean pair of heels to all the steamers we saw in twenty-four hours. This was very encouraging, even if it engendered all manner of false hopes.

It was not long before we came to regard the Skagerrak with far greater distaste than we had ever felt for Nystad. The wind headed us off the Skaw, and then spent ten days blowing a succession of gales.

One long gale would not have been so bad, but half the crew were making their first voyage and, now being somewhat out of trim, the ship would not turn head to wind, but always needed to be worn round before it. Not only did we lose much more ground by this proceeding, but

it was infinitely harder work and took much longer.

There were usually two men to the wheel, and watches below were constantly lost in long, frenzied struggles with wind-demented sails which needed to be taken in and then reset as the weather moderated a little. Several sails were blown out, or badly split, and the remnants had to be sent down and new ones bent.

Most of these operations called for "all hands on deck," and it was a measure of the effort that the longest consecutive stretch below in all that time was an hour and a half, and that the other watch never had as long as that.

Visibility was generally very bad, and necessitated the constant use of the fog-horn on the foc's'le head. Only once did we see a steamer. While pitching under five topsails and foresail, an answering wail came out of the sleet which enveloped the ship, and a Norwegian freighter reared out of the murk on a collision course. Her hands tumbled out to see so rare a sight as a square-rigger in full storm and, as they crowded her fore-deck, they were caught by a large wave and washed up against the foc's'le bulkhead. They were lucky for, had the officer on her bridge not acted quickly, we should have cut her down and sunk her like a stone.

The only vessel we saw, apart from that, was the other four-master. Once we passed her, close-to, on opposite tacks, on one of the few days when both ships were able to set a reasonable amount of sail. On several other occasions we sighted her, far off, staggering as she reached into that foul wind which bottled us both up between the Norwegian and Danish coasts.

WISER BUT WEARY

After each ship had lost over forty miles of ground in that senseless beat, we saw her for the last time, caught in a momentary flash of moonlight as her hands were laid out along one of her yards, bending a new sail. Tatters of canvas fluttered from some of her spars. Our sense of pride and exultation in our own ship, as she threshed spat, changed our view of the whole situation.

At length we arrived off the North of Scotland, but it seemed that the Fates had conspired against the ship. Only once was there the suggestion of a fair wind, and that soon shifted, catching the ship aback with a considerable loss of sail and expenditure of effort on the part of the crew.

If nothing else, our first-voyagers had learnt a good deal more of sail-handling in a month than many boys learn in a year but, in common with the older hands, they were all infinitely weary.

Thus, when the wind at last came fair, and sent the ship racing down the Atlantic at almost twelve knots under five topsails, foresail and mainsail, everyone rejoiced. We believed that this would be the last of the gales, and that the ship would soon be in the warmer, tropical weather.



Shortened down to lower topsails, the *Moshulu* ran in full gale through bright sunlight.

The wind increased, stinging us with hail squalls, and the upper topsails had to come in. We thought we had known them in all their moods, but now, in their full eighty-odd feet of length, they resisted our efforts for almost two hours.

The other watch had not made fast the fore, so we went up to give a hand. Men jumped on it, and others beat it with their fists, without making any impression on a surface which might have been formed of cast-iron. At last we did get it in—somehow—while a staysail blew out and went unheeded below us.

Then the mainsail was stowed and, heeling over to thirty-seven degrees, the ship ran like a mad thing through all the next day, in full sunlight varied with occasional squalls of lashing hail.

More staysails blew out, and in a bad moment, the helmsman was thrown over the wheel—neither for the first nor the last time that voyage—but, luckily, the ship was brought

under control before she could fly up into the wind, when she might well have been dismasted.

As the wind decreased slightly, we loosed more canvas again; but the lull was only temporary, and we spent our middle watch below taking in the upper topsails again. This was another long, weary struggle and, having the next watch on duty, we had been thirteen hours on deck when we went below at 8.0 a.m.

The wind had died almost right away and, as we wrestled with the unappetizing hard beans and salt pork which comprised our breakfast, we congratulated ourselves that we would be able to turn in while the other watch had the job of setting all sail. Apart from the physical effort entailed in this job in so large a ship, some three-hundred and two wires and ropes needed to be handled in the course of the operation. (Dinghy sailors, take note!)

We had lost too many watches below on that passage, and believed that we should now have a break.

Hardly satisfied by the beans, and dimly aware of a topsail being hoisted on the mainmast above me, I had rolled into my bunk to give one, long stretch in anticipa-

tion of much-needed sleep.

Suddenly there came a noise of booming, as of some naval battle on a vast scale. In that instant, the ship leant right over. The lee water outside the port went streaking past as the big vessel raced along. The mate, after blowing "three whistles," gave greater urgency to his message by shouting down through the skylight: "All hands on deck!"

Cursing loudly, we turned out. When we had gone below, the sky had been an unbroken blue, with just a hint of warmth in the air, and it never occurred to us that this was anything but a white squall, which would soon blow itself out. Thus we came as we were, without oilskins or sea-boots, thinking—wrongly, as usual—that we should soon be back in our bunks.

In common with the other watch, we were sent aloft to that topsail, which had not been properly set when the wind hit the ship. At the time, we did not appreciate how lucky we were that the storm had not delayed its coming for another hour or two, when all sail would have been set, since it probably would have sent us clean overboard.



The pair of them, with their dislodged bar, slid down the deck at great speed.

We must have taken about an hour and a half to take in that sail, and all the time the booming wind seemed to increase and, although the *Moshulu* was in ballast trim and high out of the water, she was dipping her foc'sle head and scooping green seas over her lee rail. This was common enough in a loaded ship, but very rare in our condition.

During the course of the operation, Jim, a young Englishman who was making the trip "for the fun of it," and who was next to me on the yard, rammed his fist into my ribs. At first I thought he had gone mad but, when he pointed, I saw that the double wheel amidships was deserted. There had been two men steering, every other man, save the master, having gone aloft to muzzle the topsail.

Afterwards we heard that the master was standing on the flying bridge, fairly well aft, when he saw one of the steering wire sheave-blocks break. With great presence of mind, he had dashed aft to the quadrant and screwed it down so that the ship could not come up into the wind before the emergency wheel could be brought into play. This fortuitous piece of observation undoubtedly saved all hands. Had he not acted as he did, this story would not have been written.

Once on deck again, we managed to haul down the inner jib and mizzen topmast staysail—the jigger had already blown out—and this left the ship under three lower topsails, foresail and fore and main topmast staysails.

We did not then know the force of the gale which was blowing, but learnt it months later. We must have encountered a wind slightly over 100 m.p.h.—Force 14 on the Beaufort Scale. This was twice the velocity at which sailing ships, built in a generation previous to the *Moshulu*, could carry this sail and, in truth, it used to be held that no canvas would stand a wind of over 75 m.p.h.

Big sailing ships like ours, the *Pamir*, and others, could normally stand any sort of weather, but the sail-handling for their crews under these conditions represented, of course, a much harder undertaking,

especially since these crews were so much smaller and the ships—and thus their sails—so much bigger.

In a gale of such strength, the task was not merely a question of reducing sail to a safe limit; this was only a beginning.

All the sails which were stowed began to work out of their gaskets and small balloons of wind appeared. We drove up aloft again and again to frap them with gaskets—and then more gaskets. Even when they were virtually marled to their yards, that blast still managed to catch canvas.

Many sails were split to ribbons, and it was no joke trying to make fast the remnants. The split lengths were flapping with such force that they could have dealt a man a bad head injury had he been in the way.

When wrestling with a royal—normally an easy job for a boy—I saw one of the lower sails blown bodily from its yard and, torn from its gear, vanish into the fury of the storm.

We had lost count of time, and working conditions were really difficult. Sprays were sweeping solidly over the weather rail and, because we had no oilskins or boots, we all were soaked, and cold—the more so after such concentrated physical effort.

Before we had stowed the first topsail, the clinometer (which registers the angle of list in a vessel) had shown the ship to be heeling to forty-six degrees. It may have been considerably more, since forty-six degrees was its

maximum reading. Had we the time to stop to think we should have laughed at our comparatively slight troubles in Nystad with groundings and our ballast!

Without warning, there came a rumbling sound which culminated in a dull roar, right beneath us. As suddenly it stopped.

In those short moments, the list of the ship had increased very considerably. Afterwards, it was calculated to have averaged sixty-two degrees. Sometimes it was more. Just imagine the deck—a slope with a gradient of two in one!

The ballast, our old enemy, had shifted down to leeward and, if our state was now pretty parlous, there was no means of knowing if it would become worse. There was nothing that we could do about it. It was a frightening development.

For example, the lee lower yardarms were now dipping in the sea as we lurched to port. No longer could a man make any pretence of standing on the deck. The only means of progression forward or aft was by means of finger holds beneath the topgallant rails, which extend the length of the bulwarks and to which most of the running gear is belayed. Few men had realised until that hour that a ledge existed under them.

The sea was quite invisible. Above the weather rail, of course, one looked only up at the sky. To leeward, or seen from the rigging, the sea was not only flattened out by the intense wind, but covered entirely in a cloud of blown spume, almost as though with the froth after some milk drink has been whipped up.

Going aloft called for tremendous strength and judgment. Although the angle of ascent was only about a third of the normal, this really made the task more difficult, as it upset all a man's previous concepts and, in any case, the wind flattened him against the shrouds. Every movement was a fight.

SLITHERING PERIL

Stepping out on to a yard called for extreme caution, as the incredible wind upset all sense of balance. It felt as though the breath were being squeezed out of a man's body, unless he turned into the wind and accidentally opened his mouth, when the sensation was as though he were being pumped up with hot air. That was an odd thing—the wind was warm, despite its force.

About midday, one of our jobs was to pass a working rope right round the mizzen lower topsail, and to heave away on it by capstan, whilst stacking the sheets very gently. The idea was to try to reduce the area spread to the wind to some degree. This might ease the ship a little. It was felt to be too risky to try to take a sail in altogether.

Working a capstan on that deck was far from funny. Only the men who were going down-hill could push on their bars. All the others were fighting to preserve their balance, and the bar was all that they had to hang on to.

Aspelin, a chubby young Finn, and Rory, from Vancouver, were behind me. Just as I started up the gradient, their bar was pointing, dangerously, straight down to leeward. I heard a scuffle.

Glancing round, I saw the pair of them with their bar, which had become dislodged slithering down the deck at great speed. At first we all laughed, as men will at other people's misfortunes, but it was no laughing matter.

Aspelin had brought up, wholly out of control, against an angled bulwark stanchion in the scuppers and lay groaning with, it proved, an injured back. Rory, though it was not then wholly apparent, had been sliding feet foremost, and had landed with one leg on each side of a stanchion supporting the flying bridge. He was not only unable to move, but in agony.

ON BEAM ENDS

The job in hand was abandoned temporarily, and we managed to get them chocked off so that they could not roll about, in the comparative sanctuary of the space under the poop, forward of the auxiliary wheel.

To carry two men on a slippery deck, inclined at such a colossal angle, was perhaps the most difficult task of the whole day, and had to be performed on all fours. It must have been extremely painful for them, but there was no help for that; nor could we judge the extent of their injuries. We had put them out of the way of further harm, and could do no more for them then.

It was not long before Holma, another Finn, was thrown across the deck as he lost his hand-hold and, because this accident took place on the midship deck, we had all the greater difficulty with him, for a ladder had to be negotiated as well.

As four men were needed to hold the wheel, and because three men were now *hors de combat*, it left only nine men, with the carpenter, sailmaker and donkeyman, and the three mates, to work the great ship under those appalling conditions.

The Finns always carried small crews by any standards, and, when the *Moshulu* was fighting for her life in as hard a wind as she was ever likely to encounter, the ballast was shifted and might shift again, and she was virtually on her beam ends, our crew was too small.

Naturally, there had been no question of dinner. It was never considered. We had worked unrelentingly for seven hours since being called out, after thirteen consecutive hours on deck, in the case of my watch, and, at 3.0 p.m. we were all served with a thimbleful of schnapps from the chart-house. I suppose that it was welcome at the time, though any movement away from the weather rail, where one might obtain some sort of hold, was taken only with great reluctance. The strain of maintaining any sort of balance was very great, and added considerably to our fatigue.

I think that all those on deck were now hooked on to the weather rigging by their arms,

trying to obtain some sort of shelter, behind the bulwarks, from the heavy sprays which swept over them and down to leeward, where the side was in the sea. We were positioned at intervals along almost the whole length of the ship. We had done all that could be done, and were waiting, subconsciously, for the next thing to happen. We had not long to wait.

I was near the mate, who was a man of vast experience and an excellent seaman though, oddly, he hated the sea and sailing ships in particular. I have no doubt that this day did much to confirm his previous opinions.

The ship presented an unusual aspect. Every piece of running rigging had been hauled bar tight, whereas the buntlines, clewlines, etc. were usually slacked well off. We already had witnessed the remarkable sight of a royal buntline, some 170-feet long, lost from its pin and, losing the whipping in its end, unravelling in all its length into a mass of rope-yarns, before

alongside with all their yards—the lowest ones, alone, weighing five tons apiece—and then the hull would have been pierced. As the hull of the *Moshulu* was little more than a big shell, the implications were obvious.

I caught the mate's eye and pointed. It would have been useless to shout, as any sound would have been drowned by the weather. The booming noise, which had heralded its coming, had never ceased. It was just as though heavy, muffled guns were firing all around us.

He started to edge for'ard and I followed. No command was given—indeed, no one would have heard any; but we all converged round the foresail gear which led down to the five-rail about the fore-mast. Only the leech-lines were belayed to pins on the top-gallant rails.

The injured men were missed as we started on the foresail. Normally all hands were required to take in such a sail; but in practice it was very seldom on these ships that it had

to be taken in because of stress of weather.

It was resolved to take in the weather side only, since the split was on that side, and we commenced by passing two extra gantlines right round the canvas to assist in spilling out the wind.

A sail of this sort is normally hauled up to the yard by means of wires secured to the foot of the sail, and led up its fore-side through blocks at the yard and the mast, and so down

to the deck. Thus, by hauling on deck, the foot, or bottom, of the sail is pulled up to the yard and the whole is reasonably snug to make fast. At least, that is the theory of the operation, though it is seldom as easy as that.

On this occasion it was far from easy. We had to haul on ropes which led up the crazy slope of the deck, and there were not enough of us. The fifteen men were unable to bring to bear sufficient strength as they fought to stand upright, but gradually, with one man gingerly easing the tack, the sail was hauled up to the yard without splitting it further.

Past experience with topsails was child's play compared with that job on the foresail. It was utterly intractable. Once we had reached the yard, with the breath almost beaten out of our bodies, we cursed the ballast in full measure. Normally, when furling a sail, the men are more or less bent over the yard with their feet pushing the foot-rope straight out



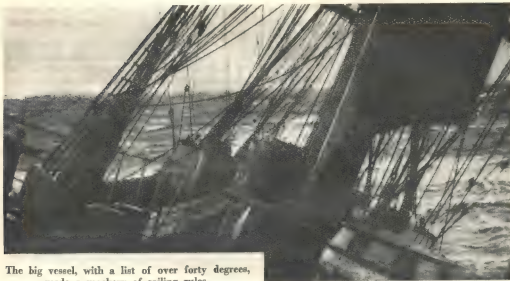
The *Moshulu*, viewed from the steamer which collected Rory, gave no indication of the ordeal through which she had passed.

it disintegrated into the air—all more quickly than it takes to tell. No one could have believed such a thing possible had he not seen it for himself.

I glanced for'ard at the foresail. It was huge, weighing over a ton and a half, and nearly ninety feet along its head. It bellied out, swept by the sea, in a hard, constant curve. To my horror, I observed a rent spreading slowly up one of its seams.

The idea of that sail splitting and threshing itself to pieces was not to be contemplated. The canvas was so large, and the forces unleashed would be so great, that it might well have taken the huge, steel foremast overboard.

Once one mast started to go, all would have gone in that wind. Attached to the hull by thick, steel rigging, they would have crashed



The big vessel, with a list of over forty degrees, made a mockery of sailing rules.

behind them, so that it is almost level with the yard itself. Now it was different.

The vast rolls of sail, forty-feet deep when set, ballooned up and back over the yard with all the flexibility of a steam-roller. The bulge was about twenty-feet round and, to avoid being knocked off the yard, we had to duck our heads. This meant that our feet were beneath us, as we were, in a sense, standing upright; but, owing to that infernal list, they slipped away to leeward, unless one happened to be very lucky and to have a stirrup supporting the foot-ropes to one's left.

The means of hanging on when out on a yard is by a thin, steel bar to which the sail is secured; but the great mass of canvas was bent back right over it, as though graven in stone, and only in a few places was such a hand-hold possible.

None of us had ever experienced such a wind before, and all were quite certain that any relaxation in hanging on would result in our being lifted clean out of the rigging. We did not have to lean against the blast, but literally to force ourselves against it to preserve our position.

Only occasionally were we able to spare a fist to thump the sail, and we might have saved our effort for all the good it did. The possibility of passing a gasket round it seemed extremely remote. The clear blue of the sky gradually faded as we struggled on the yard, and the stars came out.

It seemed odd to see them so clearly in that hard wind. There was no cloud in the sky and, in the twilight, with the ship poised at a perilous angle, in a mass of froth and welter of hot air, the whole scene was one of utter incredibility.

Another odd thing was that, despite the clear sky, visibility was extremely poor, owing to the mass of spume which soaked us high

in the rigging, and which blotted out everything only a short distance from the ship.

When it became evident that were we to stay a week on the yard nothing would be achieved, we fought our way down to the deck. The sail had to be made fast, but only by spilling more wind out of it. More gantlines were passed round the bellies, and this was no easy matter, with the wind blowing any loose end of rope straight out at right-angles. At this point, however, one of the more unusual facets of human behaviour manifested itself.

The crew comprised true Finns, Swedish-Finns, mostly from the Åland Islands, and some English-speaking boys. They mixed well enough in ordinary circumstances, and on this day each man was as good as the next. Everybody had been working for the common good without thought of nationality, for the very survival of himself, his ship and his fellows. It was sheer team-work.

Now, however, the Swedish-speaking element gathered in the comparative lee of the donkey-house and held council. The rest of us waited. We were not clear what was happening, and the mates stood uncertainly a little further aft, clinging to the royal rigging. Then, setting their mouths against each man's ear, the Swedes yelled that no one should do any more work until we had food. With that they started to claw their way aft along the fore-deck towards the starboard foc's'le.

We were staggered. Not only was the preparation of any food out of the question, in a galley which was more on its side than its deck, but the matter of the foresail was one of urgency.

Nobody agreed with them, but it was obviously impossible to handle the sail without them, and so all the rest followed. Speech was possible in the foc's'le, and the mates exhorted and pleaded, but the Swedes, with set, wooden faces, persisted in their demand.

All the while the ship fought for her life. Only the men at the wheel, right aft, and the master who conned her from the break of the poop, helped her in her plight.

In the end, probably because he had no option, the mate promised that efforts would be made to prepare food. The cook and the steward had not been seen all day.

We returned to the gantlines, and the cook was routed out. He was not a popular character, being without any sense of humour and generally in poor temper, but on this occasion he excelled himself. Although it would probably have been thrown back in his face at any other time, the watery, fish soup which he produced in due course was a miracle of cooking. I have not the slightest idea how he managed to prepare it.

The job was stopped while we consumed it, sitting on the deck of the foc's'le with our backs against the lee bulkhead, and our feet higher than our heads!

I believe it was due to that soup that we finally secured the sail. It put new life into us. No man had realised just how tired and hungry he really was. It had taken six hours to muzzle the canvas.

My watch turned in at midnight. We struggled to get into our foc's'les, and those who had not lee bunks used those of the watch still on deck, since no man could have remained in a weather one for an instant. I laid with my back against the angle of a shelf, and felt no discomfort. We slept, but it had the effect of making us feel the more tired when we were called out four hours later.

The wind had not eased at all, and four of us struggled aft to relieve the wheel. The other watch already had carried the injured men to their bunks.

We found it worse under the cover of the poop than on deck, since there was no moral uplift from the sky overhead. The *Moshulu* was just a demented ship, lying over so far that the two men on the lee side had to be lashed to prevent them slipping off the grating; we had an extraordinary feeling of isolation.

GROANS IN THE DARK

The sustenance afforded by the fish soup had long worn off, and we were excessively hungry. The wheel was almost insupportably heavy and, because it was under the poop, the only view of the sails was through a window in the fore-end of a small whale-back on deck.

We decided that one of us should go forward to see if there was any bread in the foc's'le lockers. We drew lots with rope-yarns, to see who it should be. I drew the shortest, and started off. Groping my way along the rail, I was appalled by the force of the gale after the sanctuary of the poop-space. Finally I reached my goal.

Rory was groaning in his bunk. The lee-side of the room was washing with water and, with the boom of the weather and the crash of water all round, it seemed macabre and unreal in the pitch darkness. I found only a

small crust, which I stuffed beneath my jersey under my oilskin jacket, and started the return journey.

I could see little, owing to the flung spray sweeping over the ship and, when negotiating the main deck, I found myself forcing against an unidentified object. My feet had no grip on the deck, so I forced with my arms.

Too late, I realised that it was the second mate, hooked to a rigging screw. As I dislodged him, he hurled vitriolic abuse to the elements and went hurtling down towards the lee scuppers, as though on ice. As he landed, the *Moshulu* scooped up a green sea, which may have softened the impact of his fall. Since he was evidently not injured, though thoroughly soaked, I proceeded aft before my identity became known.

BOY IS SOLE SURVIVOR

If the others found cold comfort in my old crust, at least they had a good laugh over my expedition!

After we had gone below again, the wind gradually eased to leave us, after some hours, wallowing in a long, lazy swell, with little sail set. All hands were called to send down the damaged sails and to bend new ones. Holma was soon about again, though Aspelin was several days in his bunk.

Rory was a different matter. He had sustained internal injuries and was in a very bad way. After enduring shocking pain, he became delirious or barely-conscious by turns. After a few days, when he could not have had long to live without proper treatment, we were able to put him aboard a steamer which answered our distress flares.

When the wind had dropped, the ship was left with a list of nearly fifteen degrees, which was considerable when she was already heeling over forty-six degrees. We had managed to trim the ballast back, heaving and grunting at great slaps of stone, already too familiar, and had then firmly secured them.

That was the climax of a bad start, and the voyage was normal enough thereafter. Apart from that extraordinary "strike" for food, which may have been wiser than it at first appeared, everyone had worked together like Trojans.

A big German steamer had gone down with all hands save her cabin boy, and the total casualty list of the storm was gigantic, but we had lost not a man, and received only superficial damage.

These last big sailing ships were immensely staunch. They could sail through almost any conditions.

Because it was a purely physical affair, the story of the *Moshulu's* fight through the gale may not convey in full measure all the effort and discomfort involved. There were no personal heroics and no deep tragedies. The ship was the heroine of the piece. Remembering her small, inexperienced crew, any illusion that those big sailing ships were unsafe should have been dispelled. They were superb.

WHISPERING COURAGE

By

REGINALD L. OTTLEY

The woman sat nursing her sleeping child. She dared not move a muscle, for, coiled at her feet, and ready to strike, was a deadly reptile. Her quiet heroism and presence of mind was typical of the women who helped to "open up" the outback of Australia.



I SUPPOSE that with the passing years, almost everybody can think back to some incident in their past which seems unreal — seems as if it could not possibly have happened. That's the way it is with me, whenever I think about the courage of Mrs. McLean.

I was sixteen at the time, and worked as "jackeroo" on Yamboorah sheep station, in the far south-west of New South Wales, Australia. A jackeroo is a cross between a jack-of-all-trades and a kangaroo. He's a boy learning how to do everything that has to be done on a station, and he has to hop around to do it.

My day used to start before sunrise, when I rode out after the saddle horses, and galloped them home to the horse-yards in time for the other men to start work. The day usually finished in the dark, when I had to kill a sheep or two by lamplight, so that the cook had fresh meat for the following day.

In between sunrise and sunset, I had to fit in a wide variety of jobs. Usually, after a hurried breakfast, I saddled another horse, and

stuffed a couple of thick sandwiches in my saddle-bag for a midday meal. In a quart billy-and-pannikin combined, strapped on the opposite side of the saddle, I used to carry the little packets of tea and sugar the cook handed out. Tea made in these quart pots on an open fire has no equal, believe me.

Sometimes I'd have to help with the mustering of sheep and cattle, although I didn't do too much of this at first. You need good dogs and a lot of "know-how" when you handle the stock in those parts. They can be very touchy.

Stockmen can be touchy, too. It's incredible the strife a young jackeroo can get into, if he happens to be in the wrong place when a team of good stockmen are working a big mob of sheep or cattle. I know. I've been in it.

Other times I'd have to spend several days at a stretch, riding round the property, inspecting fences, and oiling the giant windmills that

towered fifty-feet from the ground. These big mills pump up water out of timbered wells that are from a hundred to a hundred-and-fifty-feet deep.

Sometimes I had to go down one, to fit new suction buckets to a pump. This job had several hazards, such as bad air, snakes, and red-back spiders.

For the bad air, I took a candle down. If it went out, I came up very smartly, and went back again a few days later.

The snakes, I couldn't do much about. There's not much room for shadow sparring with a lively snake or two, in a space measuring four-feet by two. We never really did know how they got down there. The general theory was that they fell down.

BLUE TONGUE MENACE

Red-back spiders I used to hold the candle under and singe—that's if I saw them, of course. It's quite easy to brush against a web, and not know anything about it. A bite from a red-back is deadly.

One of the jobs I liked best, was striking for the old blacksmith whenever he needed a striker. He was a tall, lean old man, with a long, grey beard. Although at that time he was seventy-six, he stood as straight as a cement gate-post, and I've seen him swing a fourteen-pound sledge-hammer for longer than any other man I know. He burnt his own charcoal for use in the forge, and blew the fire with big, old-fashioned, leather bellows. These were worked from the side, by a wooden lever about the size of an oar. He could mould and twist metal into the most delicate shapes, all by forge and hammer.

When he'd a heavy job on hand, such as welding and fitting massive tyre rims on wagon or dray, he'd send for me, and I'd spend the day with him. While he used the marking hammer, I swung the big fourteen-pounder.

I had to hit on the glowing metal a fraction of a second after he'd touched it with his marker. If I hit inaccurately, or struck his marker before he'd whisked it away, he'd put down his hammer and tongs, and carefully take off his steel-rimmed glasses; then, while he was wiping the sweat out of his eyes and off the glasses, he'd call me for everything. He had the most remarkable flow of profanity I've ever heard. When he was satisfied with the word picture he'd painted of me, and my ancestry, he'd comb his fingers through his beard a couple of times and put his glasses on again; then we'd carry on.

Actually, although there was a difference of sixty years between our ages, we were great friends, and he wouldn't let anyone else strike for him if I was available.

The country in that part of Australia consists of vast areas of flat plains, scarred by drought and erosion. In many places, the powdered earth is ridged into wind-blown sandhills.

We had a big stretch of sandhills behind

the station homestead, and they were infested with goannas, blue-tongued lizards, and snakes. The goannas didn't do much harm. We had them up to four and five-feet long, from nose to tail tip. An odd one used to break in, through the wire netting that surrounded the garden, and rob the hens' nests of eggs, but otherwise they weren't much bother.

Blue-tongues are short, chunky lizards. They're about ten-inches or a foot long, and I've heard all sorts of discussions about them, as to whether they are harmless or not; but I do know that one of our horses, after it had been unsaddled, walked over to a sandy patch of ground to have its customary roll, and it accidentally rolled on a blue-tongue. The lizard bit the horse, and the horse died within half-an-hour. Perhaps it was shock, however.

I wouldn't like to pass a true opinion on the blue-tongue, because I gave one of them ample opportunity to bite me, and it didn't take it.

I remember that I'd ridden out to a far windmill to service it, and clean the big watering troughs. After I'd oiled the mill, I put my hand under one of the big cement troughs, to push the bung up so that I could let the water out, and scrub the trough. I'd barely got my hand under, when I heard a loud hiss. I thought it rather strange, as I hadn't even touched the bung.

Looking underneath, I saw that I had my hand almost on a blue-tongue, and it was sitting back with its mouth wide open, its forked, blue tongue licking in and out, but not quite touching my fingers. I wasted no time in grabbing the scrubbing broom, and poking the reptile away. Had it been a snake, it would have struck immediately I put my hand under the trough.

"YOU MUSTN'T MISS!"

Snakes seemed to vary. Some years they were worse than others; during my first year on Yamboorah, they were particularly bad. It was a very dry season, and drought blistered everything.

Mrs. McLean, the wife of the owner of Yamboorah, was a young woman, in her late twenties, I suppose. Although I lived in close contact with the McLeans, it wouldn't be possible for me to give a description of Mrs. McLean, other than to say that she was slim, and had nice hair. These are the two things that seemed to register on my mind, and remain with me over the years.

At that time, I was young and crazy about horses and dogs, and when a boy has those on his mind, he hasn't thought for much else.

The McLeans were nice people, and had been married for about two years, I think, when I first went to their sheep station. Ken, the husband, was born on the property. His parents had pioneered it, after trekking overland with a bullock wagon.

I suppose I'd been working on the station for about six months when Mrs. McLean came



Snakes and red-back spiders can bring tragedy to a peaceful outback sheep station.

home from hospital with her first baby. It was a boy, and as both parents wanted a boy, they were very happy about it.

One day, about three weeks after Mrs. McLean's return home, I walked along the path that passed by the kitchen door. It was a blistering hot day, and everything was still in the fierce heat of the afternoon sun. Everything except me, of course. I was on my way to the stables to catch a horse.

As I passed the gauzed kitchen door, a voice softly whispered my name. "Reg, Reg."

It was so unexpected, that for a moment I wondered whose it was, and where it was coming from; then the voice whispered again, and I recognised it as that of Mrs. McLean.

"I'm in here," she breathed, "feeding the baby." She paused for a moment, then went on insistently and urgently.

"Don't move until I finish talking." She stopped whispering again, and the silence on that hot summer afternoon was deathly. I stood still, as she'd said, not understanding for the moment, but knowing that she must have a very good reason for telling me to.

She whispered again, and it sounded as if her voice was choking. "There's a snake in here. It's only about three-feet away from my legs." A sob choked her, but she went on. "It's coiled, and has its head up. If I keep still it won't strike. Can you hear what I'm saying?"

My heart thumped so hard with horror for her, that I could barely whisper back, but somehow I did. "Yes, I can hear. What is it you want me to do?"

"Creep away, and then run for a spade. Come back through the garden door of the dining room." I waited while she caught her breath; then her stilted whispering went on.

"Take off your boots; creep in here from the dining room. Have your spade held up in the air. And for heaven's sake don't miss."

"I won't," I whispered, and felt my limbs trembling, as I moved softly away.

"Don't be long, Reg," her voice whispered after me, "I'm getting cramped."

"All right," I muttered, and ran as fast as I could.

I found a spade in the tool-shed, and raced back to the dining room, being careful not to make a noise. I pulled off my boots before going in and, with the spade held up in the air, crept toward the open kitchen door.

Mrs. McLean was sitting on a chair at the table, and luckily the baby had fallen asleep at her breast. As I appeared in the open doorway, she gave no sign or indication that she knew I was there, but kept her eyes fixed on the snake. The reptile was coiled directly between us, and had its head raised, motionless, staring unblinkingly at her.

I have no clear recollection of the next few seconds, other than that I brought the spade down with all the force I could muster, and then beat savagely until the snake was a pulpy mess, and half the kitchen floor was chopped and splintered.

The baby awoke screaming, and Mrs. McLean sobbed a little as she rocked backwards and forwards, trying to soothe him. I felt like putting my arm round her to comfort her, but instead, I cleaned up the mess. Later in the afternoon, I killed the mate of the snake. It was coiled on a shelf in the pantry.

Whatever the years may bring, there are two things I shall never forget. One is the unbearable tenseness of that hot afternoon, and the other is the stark courage of that remarkable woman.

ON its south bank, just where the Rio Segre emerges from the Sierra de Montjuich into the plains of northern Cataluña, lies the poverty-stricken township of Camarasa. A bridge, said to have been built by Hannibal during his crossing of the Pyrenees, and an ancient, wooden water-wheel, used for irrigation purposes, are the only things of interest here, but this dull place stays as a picture engraved on my mind, because of the magnanimous act of a very brave man.

A new road, following the river some forty feet above it, was driven beyond this village into the obscurity of the sheer-sided valley, to a point where two rivers meet, and here, in the course of time, a gigantic dam and hydro-electric generating station were built; and they called this place Dos Rios (Two Rivers).

Once the largest in Europe, the Camarasa Dam is ninety-two metres high, and its owners, Riegos y Fuerza del Ebro, South America, became alarmed when it was found to be leaking two-hundred-million gallons a day, much of this through fissures below its foundations.

Lerida, the capital of its province, also grew uneasy, for the city lies along the same river some fifty kilometres away and, as its citizens rightly said, a three-hundred-foot head of water, twenty-three kilometres long and in one place three kilometres wide, would cause incalculable damage and loss of life, should the dam burst. So we went out from England with our specialized knowledge and equipment to tackle the problem and to seal off those seepages.

We blasted rock, hammered wood and made ourselves a home at the confluence of the rivers Noguera Pallaresa and Segre in the shadows of the hills. Due northwards, glistening in the sunlight, was the ice and snows of the mighty Pyrenees, and Maladetta, monarch of the range.

One can recall having been incarcerated in happier places, for Dos Rios was the kind of retreat, one could well imagine, that a Western outlaw would choose to make his last game stand against the sheriff's posse.

The tall cliffs scraping at the clouds, the slanting shadows, and the eternal roar of water cascading downwards gave one the willies, and claustrophobia. To me there seemed to be an

all-pervading evil hereabouts, and soon decent men were turned into heartless brutes.

Those who go out on foreign construction sites know what contrasting characters and personalities are thrown together. There is the God-fearing man and would-be converter of souls, the half-good man who gambles, and drinks like a fish, and the downright rotter—the rogue.

There is also the chap who becomes the social outcast. He is inevitable, and no camp is complete without him. This wretch, picked upon for his shortcomings, weakness, or other peculiarities, is made the butt of ridicule, the

A JONAH

victim of diabolically wicked, practical jokes, and is finally shunned with unutterable contempt. His life is made a hell for him. Such a man was poor Jack Chalmers.

Jack arrived from England late upon the site, timing it nicely to turn into a ready-made bed. This humble couch may not have been as comfortable as his own at home, and he was indiscreet enough to mention this to one whose loving workmanship had gone into its making; and when the God-fearing man objected to that kind of language being exchanged so soon among those virgin hills, the ball of discord was set rolling.

Jack came out as storekeeper, to discover that his salary was a one-hundred - and - fifty pounds per annum less than that of any other Englishman on the job. Nor had he insisted upon danger

money as his colleagues had done.

Jack had never been abroad before; he found fault with everything foreign, criticizing Spanish food and cooking, and everlastingly moaning for roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. It was noted, though, that he found no fault with Spanish wine, and his prodigious capacity for this was paralleled only by his inexhaustible vocabulary of profanities.

This the men noted, too, and it was agreed that we had a rare genius among us. For a time he was tolerated as just "an old washer-woman" with a scandalmongering bent. He was master of the most picturesque obscenities

Men of many nations were thrown together on an engineering project in the Pyrenees. Their passions, fomented by the sweltering heat of a Spanish summer, changed them into little better than beasts. Target for their ridicule and hatred was the man they called their Jonah, whom they subjected to every indignity and abuse their fevered brains could invent. The outcast sulked—and suffered. But a man's heroism, in time of crisis, can redeem all faults. . .

and blasphemies conceivable; and the more the other men brutally tormented him, the louder and longer they laughed at his poisonous outbursts, until at last the time came when the contemptible creature could say nothing vile enough to give offence.

A balding man in his forties, Jack was round-shouldered, under average height, and was inclined to stoop. His addiction to the bottle had weakened him mentally and physically, moulded his physique to its present outline, put a permanent flush upon his face, and given him a bit of a paunch.

He was flabby, and contrasted with those

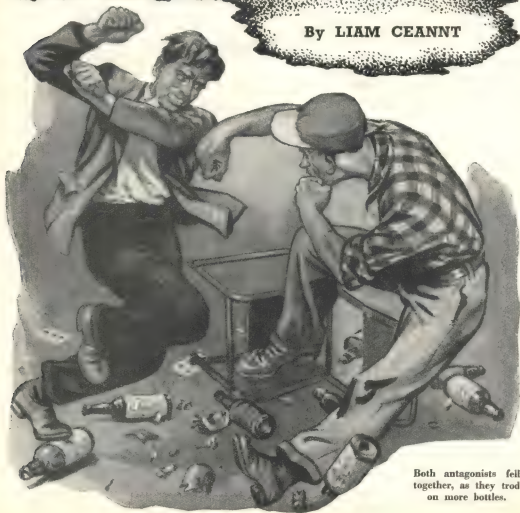
about him. Yet, in spite of his many failings, Jack had wonderfully infectious laughter, soon to be stifled out of him by the treatment he was to receive, for he had crossed the accountant, a powerful man who had likewise befriended the bottle, by casting doubts on the morals of his parents.

It happened, one Sunday in the canteen.

Steady gambling had been in progress since Saturday noon, and in that unhallowed atmosphere of smoke and smell, at least two-hundred empty bottles lay scattered on the floor. Jack was at the table trying to make up his one-hundred-and-fifty-pound deficiency, but

AT DOS RIOS

By LIAM CEANNT



Both antagonists fell together, as they trod on more bottles.

when the accountant took his lot with a better hand, the trouble started.

With a mighty swipe, energized by Spanish wine, Mick, the accountant, knocked Jack backwards off his chair, where the dead bottles, like rollers under him, trundled him across the floor.

He was up in an instant, and the two inebriates rushed at each other like tigers; but before either could land a blow, both antagonists went sprawling with identical thuds as they trod on more bottles.

Howling with hysterical delight, the onlookers nearly died of laughter. Jack, however, came off second best, his already bloody face being beaten almost to a pulp.

"I'll get you yet for this," he spluttered, continuing in language I did not understand, and feeling his loosened teeth as he hissed his invectives. "I'll tell your wife how you carry on with Señorita Paquita, you adulterous skunk!"

Amid renewed peals of laughter, Mick stepped forward and knocked him down again; then the spiliers went back to their tables to gamble for all they were worth.

Camp, we were convinced, was cursed by an evil eye. Everything was odd. To start with, our resident engineer was not a master of men, nor was he a gentleman, and the men knew it. Once I caught him shaking a Spanish labourer like a terrier shakes a rat, for no other reason than that the wretched *peon* could not understand a word of the engineer's "Spanish."

Again, the men thought it a grave mistake on the part of our Canadian managing director to introduce his American ideas, which so crudely cut across the grain of Englishmen, for this man whom he had put in authority over us had not the background nor the breeding necessary for his onerous task.

Such was the atmosphere at Dos Rios; and out of it was born the bitter hatreds and spleens that were vented on poor Jack. Mick now became his chief inquisitor. Encouraged by the others, he did all he could to drive him out of camp, or to drive him mad.

"Rat! To the wolves and bears with you!" Mick would bawl out. "And curse your stinking soul."

Mick made Jack apple-pie beds, pickled with jagged stones and chunks of iron between the sheets; he sprinkled pepper on his pillow; he let off fireworks under him at night, doctored his bedstead to collapse about him, scared him out of his wits when he was drunk—and he usually was—with hollowed-out turnips, candle-lit inside to resemble skulls. He wired up his doorknob to shock him, cut off his buttons, spoilt his food; in fact, anything he could think of. One day, however, Mick went too far. Jack came crashing into the canteen, puce with rage, and nearly tearing the door off its hinges.

"Mick, you festering cesspool!" he thundered. "You've cut the seat out of my pyjamas!"

Mick replied by throwing a peeled orange at him.

Jack rushed at his tormentor and floored him with a single blow, a feat which staggered the onlookers.

It would be impossible to describe the rum-pus that followed. The two drunks were doing their utmost to kill each other, to the uproarious delight of all present. Our gallant *dueño* (major-domo) shot between them like a lizard in an attempt to separate them, and was instantly laid out by sandwiching blows. How the men roared their approval; but once again Jack went under to writhe in pain, and lay where he had fallen.

"You'll never return to England outside your coffin, you festering maggot," threatened Mick, gasping for breath. "I'll kill you yet, you Jonah, cause of all our miseries here."

Mick had only put into words what every man on the job had come to believe was true—that Jack was a Jonah.

"How comes it," they asked, "if Jack is no Jonah, that a six-ton rock hurtles down from fifteen-hundred feet and crashes through the canteen roof and floorboards at the very moment the confounded fellow goes in? Why was the pay car waylaid by bandits near Balaguer three times on its way up to Dos Rios? Yes, Jack is the Jonah here, and to hell with him!"

So they put him in Coventry, and ignored him.

It may sound ludicrous that grown men could possibly become so superstitious—but remember where we lived, and the conditions. We were afraid of the dark, the noises in the night, and the spirits of the hills. The place seemed to be full of spooks and shapeless shadows.

"We live below the dam," big Parkin observed one day, a veil of fear clouding his bright eye. "Supposing it bursts. . . ."

Clammy chills ran down our spines as we



The camp at Dos Rios, scene of fierce hatred, violent tempers and bitter quarrels.



When the river rises, this turbulent reach becomes a seething cauldron.

thought of our accursed Jonah and the damnation that he would surely bring upon us if we failed to drive him out. So some of the men took him for a car ride on some pretext, and dumped him far from "home"; but, like a bad penny, he soon turned up again, his face a study in scarlet as he showered his dreadful profanities upon us, our ancestors, and our progeny.

This was his final outburst. From then onwards he resigned himself to contemplate a life that was no longer worth living, and no one cared a bean. Alone in his corner, he was seen to jabber inarticulately to himself and to scowl at all. "The bloke's going barmy," was the only comment passed.

We all had firearms except Jack, who could not afford a pistol. One of our few recreations was to blaze away at beer bottles thrown in up-river. As we were so engaged one evening, an eagle soared high in the valley and, by a chance in a thousand, Tom, a diamond driller, brought it down to plummet out of sight nearby.

Some hours later a Spaniard approached carrying a none-too-clean galvanized pail, and asked us to taste his eagle stew. We looked disdainfully at the black mess within.

"*Pero, amigos mios*," he tried to assure us, "*el señor Jack dice que es muy bueno*."

"Hear that, chaps?" someone bawled. "Jack's a ruddy cannibal! He's eaten Tom's eagle!"

We got a change of diet, too, by shooting salmon trout rising near the surface, and catching the dead fish in nets stretched across the river, but in none of these pastimes was Jack allowed to participate.

Fronting our huts, gouged out where flood-waters of the two rivers met, was a deep pool, a hundred metres or more in length, and strewn with great boulders of limestone rock. When the snows melted, this pool became a cauldron churning with mighty whirlpools, and of the many poor devils who had fallen into it only one man, and he was hopelessly drunk, ever got out alive.

Spring advanced, and the Spanish sun sent down its searing heat into the snuff-coloured valley, to turn the place into an oven where no metal could be handled without first spraying it with cooling water. In heat like this we sat, one day, eating our evening meal. Jack was there, too, eating in silence, ignored.

Suddenly the alarm went—the shrill, penetrating blasts of the steam whistle.

Alerted by shock, every man stopped eating as though paralyzed in the act. There was a dead silence. This whistle had one meaning only—a man was in the water!

Vaguely, at first, there came the sounds of distant shouts, drawing nearer as others took them up. Now a single voice, close and quite distinct, cried out in Spanish: "Fetch ropes and nets quickly! There's a man in the water!"

"*Y esta tocado por el sol!*" cried another.

"What are they shouting?" someone asked me.

"There's a man with sunstroke in the water," I said.

Barely was the translation out of my mouth when Jack leapt from his chair and disappeared through the window behind him, leaving us sitting there, stunned. Then we leapt up, too, and crammed through the doorway to the veranda outside. Lined up along its rail, we looked up-river to where a host of others had gathered. They were shouting and pointing towards the centre of the swollen Segre, above the confluence.

"Get him before the rivers meet," another Spanish voice rang out, "or it will be too late!"

The roaring waters hurtling past beneath us made it difficult to catch words shouted some two-hundred metres away, but from the rapid manner of the crowd's approach towards us along the opposite bank, we knew it could only be a matter of a minute or so before the stricken man would be swept into that deadly, seething cauldron.

"There he is!" cried somebody, pointing to a spot above the footbridge.

For a brief moment a head was seen, bobbing in the flood-waters where the rivers met.

As one man, we vaulted the rail to dash down to the water's edge, hoping against hope that there might be an opportunity to grab at him as he came sweeping by; but this was not to be. All currents made towards the centre, and built up the furies there.

Half-way along those deadly deeps down-river, on our side of the Segre, a man was seen running towards a jutting rock that stood high above the swirling waters. He carried a plank, and trailed some rope. It was our Jonah—Jack.

From the opposite bank, a Spaniard's pleading voice called out: "*Por Dios, hombre! no se puerde hacerlo . . . no se puerde hacerlo!*" it warned, trying to deter him. "*Es muy peligroso!*" ("For God's sake do not do it").

Eyes turned from the drowning man to Jack, as he lashed the rope to his plank, and quickly tied the loose end about his waist.

"Come back! Come back!" we cried to him. "Don't do it, Jack! Don't do it!"

We ran down to prevent the suicidal fellow from plunging to his doom.

Jack glanced round and saw the men he hated, and those who hated him, drawing nearer.

Then he looked back to the man in the water. With moments still in hand, he waited for his chance. Then he prepared to leap.

The first of those who ran to hold him back arrived too late. Jack took a running jump and, with his plank, plunged into the hissing maelstrom.

A cry of dismay was voiced as Jack went down into the first, great, gurgling vortex, and out of sight.

Helpless to render aid, we watched appalled at the horror before our eyes—two drowning men so near, and yet beyond our reach.

None had the time to dwell upon how badly he had treated that brave man during those last months of his unhappy life with us, and now he was surely on his way to Eternity. Yet above the roarings and the tumult on the banks, above the death-rattlings of those funnelling vortices, I heard a voice from the New Testament, quite clearly in my ear, a voice which said:

"Verily I say unto you, greater love hath no man than this, than that a man lay down his life for his friend."

What friend? Was this a mockery? Jack had no friend. The cruel men had wished him dead.

WHIRLING DEATH

Save for the maddened waters, an awful silence hushed the valley. Both men had gone from sight.

A crashing crescendo of excited voices rent the air as Jack shot to the surface, clutching at his plank. Nearby, and higher up, the other man reappeared, but only to be spun around the dizzy periphery of that same whirlpool, nearer and nearer to the centre, until it sucked him down. When next we saw him, feet up and farther down the deeps, we guessed that he was dead.

The Spaniards crossed themselves and cried to Holy Mary, to the Deity, to *la santissima Trinidad*; and we, who were of a cruder race, cried out, "Poor so-and-so!"

Yet Jack still battled on to reach the man.

"Jack! Jack! Come back!" we cried. "Strike out for the bank!"

A powerful brute stood, shocked at what he saw. "He's hurt and bleeding," Mick said.

Jack lost his grip and the plank floated from him, the length of the rope away.

Then Mick, the brute, became the man he really was.

"I'm going in after Jack!" he bawled.

"Quick, tie a rope to me!"

Tugged by his plank, and floundering, Jack was carried rapidly down, towards boulders around which waters piled up to hurtle like millraces. Nothing could live there, not even a fish could survive the battering.

TEARS OF A HERO

Six strong men took the strain as Mick went in; but the charging waters swept him to the bank. He tried again, but failed.

The plank now tossed into the millrace, and wedged against two rocks. Jack was nearly done. He struck his head against the plank and shot beneath it, only to be jerked to a stop a second later, and there he spun, like a propeller, at the end of his tautened rope.

"Give me slack," said Mick, "and I'll take a running jump."

Our hearts in our mouths, we watched the third man go in. He came up in time to fling his powerful arms about the plank, and there held on.

Willing hands hauled at the rope, and Mick retained his grasp. The plank shifted and with it, too, came Jack.

He soon recovered, and his first concern was for the man he had tried to save.

"Did you get him, too?" he asked, weakly.

When he read the answer in our eyes, Jack broke down and sobbed.

Mick took Jack's hand in his. "Jack, old chap," he faltered, "we have all seen the best a man can do. Cheer up, old pal. There is no Jonah at Dos Rios any more. We saw you settle him in the bravest act of all."

The despised untouchable of an hour ago now found a new life awaiting him, and his happy, infectious laughter was soon to be heard again.

It would not be true to say that he curbed his language, or that he altogether abandoned the bottle, but he was allowed to gamble again, and to participate in our humble sports.

Then, one night, something dreadful happened in a thunderstorm, and Jack's face clouded over. Lightning struck the roof off our chief's office.

Mick looked at Jack, and Jack looked down at his boots.

"No, Jack," Mick said, smiling. "I won't have it. We've been wrong all the time. It's our engineer who is the Jonah here, after all."

As for that poor Spaniard, his body was recovered much later, in a net stretched across the river near Hannibal's Bridge.



New Guinea natives see few white men. This one ran away after the photographer's camera clicked.

SEPIK RIVER FREE FOR ALL

By

E. J. HENDRIKS

In the author's view, New Guinea is one of the few places in the world where genuine adventure is still possible. He gives here an account of one of his five visits to the area, which nearly proved to be his last, when he took part in a manhunt.

EVERY time I visit New Guinea I find trouble—and I've been there five times. I've been chased by head-hunters, and I have been in an air crash and a shipwreck, among other uncomfortable situations.

New Guinea, which is just two degrees south of the Equator, is one of the few countries in the world where genuine adventure still is possible; with Brazil and the Polar areas it even provides work for the dying profession of exploring.

The country has a white population of less than seventeen-thousand, and most of them are characters; a man needs to be an individual to live there in the first place.

There are planters, patrol officers, missionaries, schooner captains, anthropologists, pros-

pectors, bush pilots and labour recruiters. Most are Australians, but a few Englishmen arrive on every ship and 'plane, attracted, as Englishmen always have been, to anything that looks like a frontier country—and New

Guinea is just that—Australia's frontier against the clamorous races of south-east Asia.

The general term New Guinea is a misnomer as the country is in two parts—Papua, the Australian-owned southern section and New Guinea, which Australia administers under United Nations mandate. The Territory of New Guinea includes New Britain, New Ireland and many smaller islands.

Nobody knows just where the Papuan-New Guinea border lies, and nobody cares. Anyway, the only way of crossing it is by air. What roads do exist, reach timidly only a few miles into the jungle, inhabited by a million-and-a-half natives, many of whom have never seen a white man.

The war gave Australians a vested interest in New Guinea. In the hills and on the beaches, they stopped the Japanese and kept them from the Australian mainland. With its mud, mountains and jungle, rain, heat and diseases, New Guinea was the war's toughest battleground, and very few soldiers wanted to visit the place after the war.

I was one of the few; probably I am the only one to retrace all the wartime trails. Not

mere nostalgia took me back; I wanted to see if New Guinea was the country I imagined it to be—a Little Africa, with all the potential, adventurous and otherwise, that Big Africa had a century ago.

As in Africa, I didn't have a dull moment. First there was the air crash. (I had already survived a wartime crack-up.) The mishap was sheer bad luck and not the pilot's fault; the bush fliers of New Guinea are equal to the best in the world. I realized this on the day that I took off with Ralph Cosham, in a Dragon Rapide, to fly over the great Owen Stanley Range, New Guinea's spine.

PLANE BECOMES GLIDER

The surface of the small, unmanned strip was sticky with mud after a downpour; the runway was short, and ended abruptly against a giant wall of solid jungle. The Dragon was loaded with heavy stores. All this added up to the fact that it would be difficult to lift the plane off the deck.

The trouble with jungle airstrips is that a pilot gets only one chance to take off; if he fails, then his subsequent crash makes a good story in the clubs. Despite the difficulties, Cosham was unperturbed. The take-off, he said cheerfully, would be interesting.

It was. We started off at full throttle, lurching over the uneven strip, with the jungle wall looming up at a frightening pace. I noticed with alarm that we weren't even running straight. Cosham was making a narrow-angle zig-zag, and every time he changed direction the small plane lurched over on one wheel and seemed about to tip onto its wing.

I felt sure that only a sudden miraculous transformation into a helicopter could save us from disaster, but suddenly we were airborne, and missing the treetops by inches.

Cosham confided that his zig-zag technique—he called it "shouldering"—was a dangerous but useful way he had evolved of getting a heavy aircraft off a sticky strip.

An hour after take-off, the engines packed up.

Cosham's astonishment completely masked any fear he may have felt. Mine wasn't masked—I could see how awkward it was, being in an aeroplane five-thousand feet up, without any motive power.

Cosham wasn't beaten, however. He made that Dragon behave like a glider, and we were still driving forward when we hit the jungle top.

The matted foliage cushioned the impact, and although Cosham and I were knocked cold, both of us woke up in one piece, which is more than could be said for the Dragon.

Normally, survivors of an air crash should stay by the wreck, but this rule doesn't necessarily apply in New Guinea. When Cosham and I looked up, we saw that the rubbery jungle had closed over the hole we had made when entering. Our entrance was so thoroughly con-

cealed, that we might have dived into the ocean. The radio was wrecked and all we could do was start walking.

Hungry, tired and suffering from shock, we struggled on for two days. We reached an isolated village, where we got some bananas, potatoes and pig meat, as well as directions to the nearest Government station.

We arrived at this lonely post at mid-morning, to find the patrol officer on his veranda pouring himself tea.

He looked up as we climbed the steps, and asked mildly: "Like a cuppa?"

Like all old hands of New Guinea, he never became excited. Excitement, to the jungle veteran, is a form of panic—and panic can kill.

A year after this incident, I worked my passage on a trading schooner making from Lae, on the north coast, to Brunei, in Borneo.

In the Celebes Sea, west of the Halmaheras, we ran into the eye of a typhoon. Trying to save his boat, the skipper turned about and ran before the wind.

He ran so fast, however, that during the night we hit the coast of New Guinea, and were wrecked. The native crew swam ashore; the skipper and I clung to the disintegrating remains of the schooner, with waves crashing over us, until morning brought the storm's end.

Later, when we stood on the beach, the skipper said resignedly: "It's no use kicking. I knew the risks I took when I came to New Guinea."

That, I found, was the general philosophy of the place. The rewards were high, for a man game enough to take a chance—if luck was with him. One very big attraction about life in "Little Africa" is that a man may keep every penny he earns; there is no income tax.

ERROL FLYNN, TOO!

On my fourth trip to New Guinea, I narrowly escaped drowning in the fetid Fly River when a rope bridge collapsed. I happened to be on the bridge at the time.

I could reasonably expect that my fifth trip would be uneventful, but in fact, it turned out to be the most remarkable of all. I wanted to travel up the Sepik, a tortuous, winding river that rises in the mountains of Dutch New Guinea and finishes up, four-hundred miles later, on the north coast, a hundred miles from Madang.

Nobody yet runs tourist excursions on the Sepik, and even veteran patrol officers usually take a strong escort of native police when patrolling far up-river.

The only men who completely disregarded the Sepik's dangers are the labour recruiters. These tough, colourful characters will venture anywhere, without escort, to sign up natives for work on the plantations throughout New Guinea territory.

Before he became a film star, Errol Flynn

was a recruiter. In Flynn's day, recruiters used many underhand ruses to induce a native to "make paper"—that is, to sign an agreement to work on a plantation.

One successful pre-war recruiter employed three pretty native married women as his assistants. One of the girls would coax a young buck into a compromising situation; when the victim was hooked, the recruiter would come along and threaten to report him to the District Officer, who would punish the native for adultery.

"The best thing you can do is to make paper and get out of the village until the rumpus dies down," the recruiter would say, and the native would sign up eagerly. Today, however, recruiting is strictly supervised.

When I arrived in Madang two recruiters, Mike Hanley and Bill Davies, were going up

the Sepik by launch, and taking with them John Herrod, a young patrol officer assigned to travel to the village of Ibarfornek, in the dense jungle of the Tirpitz Mountains, to arrest a native who had attacked a missionary. I obtained permission to accompany Herrod.

Hanley warned me that I would be bored on the river.

"You'll probably go heat-crazy," he said. "I've seen men get claustrophobia, when the jungle closes in on the Sepik."

"It's deadly all right," Patrol Officer Herrod agreed. "No fun at all."

They were hard men, the three of them. Hanley and Davies were in their forties, Herrod was only twenty-three. At thirty, a man is getting old for jungle patrol work.

The first few days on the steamy river were quiet enough. The fourth night, we parked the powerful launch against the bank and left no watch, as this part of the river was known to be peaceful. The most troublesome tribes,



The three men used jungle knives to ward off spear thrusts by the screaming natives.



A Dragon Rapide, just after landing on an airstrip. The landing experienced by the author, in a similar machine, was not so smooth.

farther up-river, never moved outside their tribal territory.

At about midnight, I woke up as something bumped against the launch. Seconds later, yells and shrieks cracked the night apart.

I grabbed a machete, the only weapon I could find, and ran to the deck where a savage battle was under way. Hanley, Davies and Herrod were surrounded by screaming, dancing natives who were jabbing at the white men with spears. The patrol officer and recruiters were defending themselves with jungle knives.

I saw a native spill oil on the deck and try to fire it, so I charged him clean over the side and into the oozy river.

Using the flat of the knife, I waded into the circle of natives. This gave my companions a chance to break out, and a few minutes later we had cleared the launch.

Some of the natives dropped into a dug-out canoe. Hanley lifted a heavy box of stores and threw it on the canoe's stern. The prow jumped clean out of the water, and the craft capsized.

As we puzzled the reason for this strange attack, a sharp voice came from the river bank.

"Get your hands up!"

"What's that?" Hanley snapped, in astonishment.

"It's some crazy movie scene," Davies murmured incredulously. But the two white men who came out of the darkness and boarded the launch weren't acting. Grim-faced, they held heavy .45s in their hands.

Herrod moved towards them. "I think you ought to know who I am," he said.

One man prodded a .45 at him. "Not interested in your pedigree, son," he said. "Just get this. You're turning this boat around and

heading back to the coast. You might have been walking back, so don't push your luck."

Hanley threw his knife straight at the man, and that brought on another free-for-all. The men fired several ineffectual shots before we overran them, but they took a couple of machete cuts before they cried quits.

"Now, I'll tell you who I am," Herrod said. "I'm a Government patrol officer, and you two birds are under arrest."

It seemed that the men had found gold in a tributary of the Sepik, and had mistaken us for rival prospectors whom they suspected of coming to jump their claim. They had hired the natives to burn the launch and drive us away.

Herrod left his prisoners with Hanley and Davies, and then he and I set out to walk the hundred miles to Ibarfornek.

We had no escort. The District Officer had decided that the sight of armed native police could well antagonize the head-hunters to the point of warfare, while they would respect two unescorted white men. I hoped this theory would work out.

We carried heavy packs, and the track—when we had a track—was muddy and steep. When we weren't sweat-soaked, we were rain-drenched. We toiled painfully up the hills, and slithered just as painfully down them.

"Ibarfornek isn't far from Telefomin," Herrod remarked one night in our tiny tent. "A pal of mine was speared to death there last year."

"You're telling me that *now*?" I said.

"I like company," Herrod said. "Had I told you before, you might not have come with me."

We reached Ibarfornek on the evening of

the sixth day. Bush telegraph had told the villagers that we were on our way the moment we left the launch, but they pretended to ignore us.

Herrod paid his respects to the headman, called the *luluai*, and this befeathered, villainous-looking individual gave us a hut to sleep in. Not that we got much sleep.

First of all the *luluai*, to show his hospitality, invited us to attend a *kinana*—a get-together of the younger people of the tribe. About a hundred of them attended the affair, held in a low hut jammed almost solid with thick smoke from two fires.

The natural temperature was about seventy degrees, so the fires certainly weren't needed for warmth; Herrod said they were ritualistic.

The men sat on one side of the hut, and the girls on the other, all with their hands behind their backs. At a signal, each pair began to rub noses, changing to another partner every four minutes or so.

The continual chanting, and the noise from jangling necklets, armlets and earrings gave the performance a weird effect.

A *kinana* isn't merely a way of filling in time. When a buck rubs noses with a girl, he either gets a kick out of it or he doesn't. If he does, then he regards the girl as a possible bride; but before he makes a decision, he moves along and samples all noses.

Tribal elders oversee the *kinana* to ensure that emotions stay in check—and that hands stay behind backs. Nose-rubbing may not sound very exciting, but when it goes on hour after hour, accompanied by rhythmic, suggestive chanting, it can be highly inflaming.

The smoky atmosphere didn't bother the natives, but after two hours it drove Herrod and me out of the hut. Back in our sleeping quarters I suggested that we take turns on guard duty.

"The fuzzies won't attack us tonight," Herrod said, yawning. "That won't happen until I do something that they don't like. Better sleep well—this could be our last chance for some time."

"THE LOVELY BANG!"

I slept badly. Once when I woke up Herrod was gone. I was about to go in search of him when he reappeared.

"Just been making a reconnaissance," he said—and went back to sleep.

Next morning, in the council hut, Herrod met the *luluai* and a dozen elders in conference. In their own tongue he asked them to hand over the native who had attacked the missionary, but the *luluai* refused.

"He says that we'd better get out of Ibarfornek before he loses his shirt," Herrod told me.

Some rapid palaver followed. Herrod threatened to call down the wrath of the heavens, unless the native was handed over at once. The *luluai* replied that he could call

down some pretty effective wrath himself—and it wasn't as far away as heaven.

With a show of anger, Herrod stalked out of the council hut. Just outside he stopped, snapped on his cigarette lighter and lit a bluish, tube-like thing almost hidden by the thatch. When it began to fizz, I knew what that tube was—a fuse. Herrod had been busy while absent from our hut during the night.

Nonchalantly we strolled into what passed for the market square of a native village. A few seconds later, a thunderous, ear-splitting explosion lifted the top off the council hut, and laid two of the walls flat. Out from the wreckage tottered the *luluai* and his elders, dazed and shocked.

"Wasn't that a lovely bang?" Herrod asked, happily. "There's nothing like gelignite to make an impression. I always carry a stick or two."

"WE DARE NOT SLEEP"

The hut had been built of mud and *pit-pit*, a native thatch, so there was little risk of the members of the council being injured by flying debris.

We sat in the sun and waited. Pretty soon, some very severely shaken councillors, awed by the heaven's noisy wrath, brought along the miscreant native and surrendered him. They seemed to be very relieved to be rid of him.

"We'll move out at once," Herrod said briskly. "The *luluai*'s remorse won't last longer than his headache."

Taking the arrested native, we set out to walk back to the Sepik. The pace on the way to Ibarfornek was fast enough, but the return journey was racking.

"We must keep moving," Herrod said. "The tribal warriors will follow us shortly, and if we go to sleep. . . ."

We didn't sleep, not for three days and nights, not until we were well inside territory banned by strong and compelling tribal traditions to the hunters who stalked us along the jungle trails.

We were dead-beat when eventually we reached the Sepik and the camp Hanley and Davies had established. Hanley met us as we marched in.

He looked us over critically, for we were stained and muddy, bearded and red-eyed, our clothes in tatters from the claws of the dreaded lawyer vine.

"Have some trouble?" he asked.

"Not a bit," Herrod said. "It was a piece of cake."

"Yeah. It gets me down," Hanley said. "Time was when a man could count on a little excitement around here, now and again. It's tame these days."

But New Guinea and Papua are anything but tame, for the country itself is untamed. Here is a place where swashbucklers can make a last stand, where adventure in many forms still can be found, and where boredom has no meaning.

The true account of how a man's folly turned a lion into a savage maneater that terrorized a village, until a small boy's luck—and his master's vigilance—ended the reign of fear.

BELOW the Lupata Gorge, through which the Zambezi hurls itself, the country opens out and flattens. Six or eight miles beyond the lower entrance to the gorge and on the north bank of the river, you come to the lagoon of Lifumba. It is an L-shaped lake with the longer arm of the L running more or less at right angles to the river.

The lagoon is connected to the river by a narrow channel overgrown with *matetti*, a tall, tough cane-like growth, and long coarse grass; but since hippo often make use of this channel, they have deepened it so that it is possible to take a canoe or even a small boat through it.

In the angle formed by the two arms of the lake there is a patch of forest with a lot of dense undergrowth, but with reasonably clear patches here and there. The ground is heavy loam and stoneless.

KILLER OF THE LIFUMBA

I had a very pleasant base camp at one period on a small island, the only one, in the angle formed by the L of the lake or lagoon of Lifumba. As the crow flies I was, I suppose, about a mile and a half or thereabouts from the Zambezi. There was a large sandy island lying offshore, carrying a considerable native population. They were permanent residents there because the river came over the island only during exceptional floods.

As on all Zambezi islands which are not covered annually by the seasonal floods, there were large patches of *matetti* which grows to a height of twelve to fifteen feet or more. The leaves are pointed, the points being as hard and as sharp as needles.

The people here grow good crops every year on the rich alluvial mud left by the river when the seasonal floods subside, and whilst they are actually subsiding. They also have a few goats and quite a few hogs and live a very pleasant, carefree existence.

There are no mosquitoes because there is always a fairly swift current in the river and because, on account of the sandy ground, no water lies around. The tsetse fly which swarms on the mainland, does not come over here as there is no bush or grass for it. On top of all that, it never gets cold.

From time to time lion swim or paddle across, depending on the depth of water, and take toll of the goats and, above all, the pigs. But up to this time they had never interfered with the human inhabitants of the island.

The lion might spend a few days, possibly even a week, on the island; and then, when the owners close-herded their precious hogs so that the lion were unable to get a feed, the intruders returned whence they came.

Unfortunately, a certain *Chefe de Poste* from over the river, who had no jurisdiction on the north bank or on this island which lay off the north bank, heard of these occasional visits by lion to this island, and decided he wanted to get a good close-up photo of a real wild lion. He sent one of his native police across to the headman of the island with orders that the headman was to send a message across immediately a lion showed up on the island.

Well, the *Chefe de Poste* was white and he

was a government official. Although in those days it was a different government from that on the north bank, the headman did not dare to refuse a representative of authority.

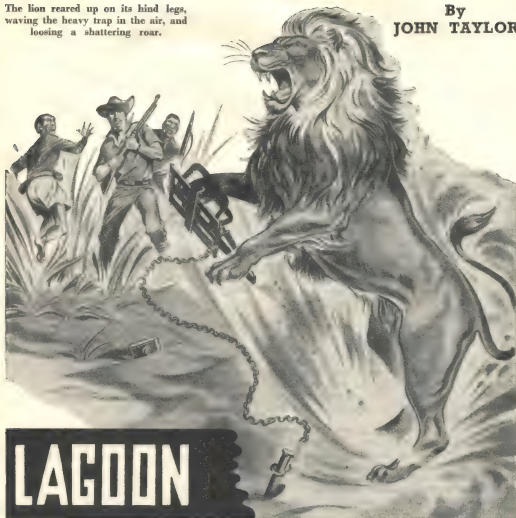
When the next lion came over and grabbed a hog, the headman sent a couple of men across the river by canoe to tell the *Chefe*. An hour or two later the official arrived and asked to be taken to where the lion was known to be feeding.

The beast was easily followed on that clean white sand, but by the time they got to where he had had his feed, they found that he had finished and had made his way into a dense tall stretch of *matetti*. He would certainly lie-up there during the day, as the *matetti* would afford cool shade and no likelihood of being disturbed.

The *Chefe* had brought with him a powerful lion-trap, weighing about eighty pounds. He had his men set this where the lion had fed in a little clear space on the edge

The lion reared up on its hind legs, waving the heavy trap in the air, and loosing a shattering roar.

By
JOHN TAYLOR



LAGOON

of the *matetti*. As there was so little left of the hog, he told the headman to provide another—for which he promised to pay—and tie it securely near the trap but on the side nearer the village.

He hoped that the lion would come out of the *matetti* at the same place where he had entered, searching to see if he had left himself anything to eat. If the lion did so, perhaps he would step into the trap.

The Chefe then went back home, saying he would return next morning. If the lion were caught in the trap, they were not to do anything that might cause the beast to tear off his foot and escape. This often happens with these powerful steel traps.

Sure enough, early that night there came a sudden, savage roar followed by a series of roars and snarls from the direction of the trap. It was evident that the wretched lion had stepped into the thing when he made a pounce on the hog which had been tied up there.

Early next morning the villagers trooped along to see what there was to be seen. The lion was there all right and tried to make a rush at them; but the trap had been pegged down so firmly that he only came to the length of the chain.

The headman drove the people back to the village to await the white man. He knew that the lion would be able to pull the trap adrift without too much difficulty, on account of the sandy ground not giving too firm a hold on to the peg.

Messengers were sent across the river again; and an hour or two later the Chefe arrived, with camera and rifle and accompanied by two native police armed with worn-out old military rifles. The party made its way to where the lion was held; but when the Chefe approached to take a photo, the lion made a rush, loosing a savage roar.

The Chefe fell over backwards, and his contingent legged it from the scene as fast as

they could. The photographer scrambled to his feet, leaving his camera there, and also departed.

The lion had again been pulled up by the chain, and was lying down, growling and snarling. The jaws of the trap would have broken the lion's foreleg (he had been caught by the off fore) three or four inches above the paw, and if too much twisting and turning took place, the paw would be torn off or the lion might even chew it off himself.

These traps are cruel and brutal things and ought never to be used, except possibly in the case of man-eaters and cattle-killers. Naturally, any means are legitimate to catch them. But this lion was not yet a man-eater.

After a while the Chefe pulled himself together and decided that, since the lion seemed to be fairly secure, he must retrieve his camera, but he didn't feel like getting it himself, so he told one of his police to fetch it while he covered the man with his rifle.

The policeman handed his old rifle to his companion, and advanced towards the lion, but before he reached the camera, the lion made another jump towards him, roaring savagely.

At that, the white man fired his rifle at the lion, but was so excited and scared that he only slightly wounded him. The lion thereupon reared up on his hind legs, waving the heavy trap in the air, and loosed such a shattering roar that the "hunt" was completely demoralized. They withdrew and the Chefe considered it was time he had some refreshment. He broached some sardines and bread, and had a glass or two of wine.

After that, he thought he would shoot the lion and then take his photos. He stalked up very carefully to where he thought he ought to be able to see his quarry, flanked on either side by his rifle-armed police. To his chagrin—and possibly to his relief!—he found that the lion had departed, minus one paw which was still in the trap.

DRIVEN OUT BY HUNGER

The Chefe cleared off in his canoe across the river where there was no chance of the lion getting to him. He was leaving a crippled and savagely vindictive lion behind him on a thickly-populated island where there was no game, and even if there had been, the lion with his missing paw would have been unable to catch and kill it for some considerable time.

That, however, did not cause the Chefe to lose a wink of sleep, though the lion was almost certain to become a man-eater as soon as he became really hungry.

For five days the lion lay up nursing his wounds. Then hunger drove him out. In the meantime, since there had been neither sight nor sound of the lion, the natives being what they are, either forgot all about him or else assumed he had made his way back to the mainland. Had they taken the trouble to stroll along the north shore of the island they would not have failed to see his spoor and therefore

would have known that he must still be on the island.

The first they knew was, one night, when they heard a savage roar right on the outskirts of the main village or *kraal*. Although they would shut up their hogs if it was known that there were lion on the island, the villagers did not usually bother to do so. Moreover, they themselves slept in the open unless it was raining and, anyway, the reed doors of their huts were not fastened: they merely propped a stick against them.

As the moon was full, they were able to see the lion as he killed and carried off a small hog. Lion do not roar as they kill. The reason this one did was probably because in the excitement of securing something with which to appease his ravenous hunger he forgot about his missing paw and tried to use it. That must have been a very painful reminder—hence the roar.

FIRST HUMAN KILL

The natives now knew that the crippled beast was still on the island. Thereafter they shut up their hogs every night—the goats had always been shut up by night. So then the lion commenced his man-eating career.

Even so, it would seem from what the people told me that he did not want to become a man-eater and would much have preferred to live on their hogs, had he been able to. He would grab a stray hog whenever he could, even after he commenced killing Man.

His first human kill was an old woman who had wandered along the edge of the water close to the *matetti*, searching for driftwood for her cooking fire three evenings after the last hog had been killed. She had no time to call out; but the lion must have again hurt his injured leg because other women not far away heard him snarl loudly. But by the time they got there with some of their menfolk, the lion had dragged the body of the old woman deep into the bed of *matetti*.

On another night, during the dark period before the waning moon rose, the lion just walked into one of the huts, by pushing the reed door aside, and killed one of the occupants.

He killed so quickly and silently that he might have removed the dead man without anyone being the wiser, had he not again growled angrily, probably through again hurting himself. The deep growl awoke the victim's wife who saw the lion disappearing with her husband in his mouth. She screamed and awakened the rest of the village; but the lion was gone with his victim into the *matetti*.

This *matetti* is very difficult stuff through which to try to force your way. It grows close together and, as I have previously mentioned, the long thin leaves have points like needles. It is possible to get through it, of course, but not quickly. As you force your way through, the canes clash and rattle against one another.

After this killing the headman called his people together for a palaver. It was obvious



The mighty Zambezi, on the north bank of which stretched the Lifumba lagoon that was tyrannized by a prowling maneater.

that something would have to be done since his was about the only hut on the island strong enough to withstand the lion. He had had poles brought across from the mainland for the construction of it. The other villagers had brought no more than the absolute minimum number of poles necessary for theirs, only enough to give them a bit more stability than the *matetti* from which huts were mainly built. This meant that the lion would have no difficulty in breaking into almost any hut that took his fancy.

Furthermore, the men were almost entirely unarmed except for the little axes. A very few had fish spears, which were merely a straight round piece of iron sharpened and stuck into a light shaft. They were used to pin mud-fish to the bottom in shallow water, so that the owner of the spear could reach down and get hold of them. Such weapons, if you could call them that, would be little deterrent to a hungry and determined lion if he attempted to break into one of the flimsy huts.

It was the headman's suggestion that they should all collect and, with as many drums and tin-cans as they could raise amongst them, try to drive the lion off the island by beating him out of the *matetti*. The lower end of the island converged to a point, so if they lined up across the *matetti* and drove towards the point they might succeed.

He suggested that the men go first, and that the women should follow behind and add

their voices to the general hullabaloo. But no woman who was carrying a small baby was to do so lest the *matetti*, springing back after someone had passed through it, should blind the infant strapped to the mother's back. The same thing might happen if anything went wrong and the mother turned to flee.

They made the attempt, but owing to the variation in the density of the *matetti* in different places, they were unable to maintain a straight line. Some forged ahead of the others. None of them could see the whole of the party. At best, each man could see only those immediately beside him.

The hunters caught up with the lion when about halfway through. Some of them heard him growl, though nobody saw him. They redoubled their noise, and were greatly encouraged when it appeared that the lion had moved on ahead of them towards the point. They continued, and all seemed to be going "according to plan," until the lion reached the point and saw the river in front of him.

None of the people had ever attempted to drive a lion before. Had they commenced the drive at sundown, it is probable that the lion would have taken to the water and made over towards the mainland; but he had no intention of doing so at midday. He broke back without warning and clawed down a man who had managed to get too far ahead of his companions directly on the track followed by the lion.

The lion had roared savagely as he attacked

the wretched man. This caused great confusion as nobody could see what was happening. In an endeavour to hear better, those close by ceased beating drums and shouting whilst those farther away increased their noise.

This no doubt had the effect of giving the lion the idea that his best escape route was straight back the way he had come. He therefore passed through the gap he had made for himself in the line of male beaters, and then found only a couple of women in front of him. These two had closed in together for moral support. They turned to run, but the lion was right close behind them. He sprang on one of the women and crushed her skull with a blow of his sound paw; the other he knocked flat, but she was saved by the fact that it was the lion's injured leg that hit her a glancing blow.

The man who was attacked had not had time to do more than shout, and there was so much noise going on that no one realised there was anything unusual about it. The two women, however, screamed loudly a couple of times before the lion was on them. Their screams had been heard clearly above the general din. At once all other noise stopped and people shouted to each other, asking what had happened.

Those closest to the unfortunate women forced their way through the intervening *matetti* and arrived on the scene just as the second of the two women was struggling to her feet. The other was suspiciously still.

That finished the beast. The lion was now behind them, between them and the village. The hunters decided to make their way on to the point and around along the shore where the walking would be easier and where they would not meet the lion again. It was only then that they found the earlier casualty. The man was badly mauled on one shoulder and right down his chest, and one ear was hanging in strips.

Although they had suffered for their excusable error in attempting to drive the lion during the midday heat, they succeeded in their purpose. For either that night or the next the lion himself left the island. Evidently he made up his mind to seek some place where he would not be confined to the extent that he had been by having only that one large belt of *matetti* in which to lie up.

The islanders knew nothing of this until word came that a maneater had appeared on the mainland opposite the island. Since this was not one of those notorious maneater areas, and since they had not had a maneater around



The tribesmen were on their guard constantly against the fierce, stalking lion.

for more years than any of them could remember, they assumed it could only be the same one. They breathed a sigh of relief and hoped he would not return to plague them again.

All this I learnt only later. I had been away hunting marauding elephant in another district, and now I returned for my annual war against the buffalo. I arrived by canoe and, before making my way into the Lagoon of Lifumba to my base camp, pulled in at this island where there was a man whom I supplied with onion seed each year. He grew the crop, and I allowed him to keep half of it for his trouble, an arrangement which he found very profitable. My half of the crop kept me in onions for the rest of the year.

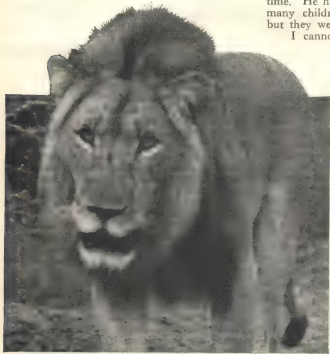
No sooner was I established in my base camp when a deputation arrived by canoe to tell me of the maneater. I expected that, since the islanders had told me about him. There was no doubt that it was the same animal. His spoor clearly showed that he lacked one fore-paw. There were many natives living along the river, from the *kraal* right alongside the channel that connects the lagoon with the river, right away upstream to Bandari at the lower entrance to the Lupata Gorge, a distance of about six miles.

The lion prowled along this strip, and had killed a number of people and also many of their hogs. At that time he was in the vicinity of the local chief's *kraal*. He had made an

abortive attempt there to grab a woman the previous night, but she had just managed to escape.

She, like many others, was living on her lands in a shelter built about six or seven feet above the ground on stilts because the buffalo had commenced raiding the crops. She had climbed the rough ladder and was about to enter the little hut on hands and knees when she happened to glance behind her and saw the lion crouching to spring up.

With great presence of mind, she scraped a large basket off the platform so that it fell down on the lion. He immediately pounced on it and thus gave the woman time to scramble into the hut, slam the reed door to, and prop it shut with a stout stick.



Normally a lion will not launch an unprovoked attack on a man, unless it is unable to hunt its usual prey.

It would have been totally inadequate protection had the hut been on the ground. The platform upon which the hut was built, however, extended only about a foot beyond the walls of the hut, and the lion had no place to stand if he sprang up. Wild lion are not given to climbing ladders, and as this one lacked a front paw, he would be unable to hold on to anything and still grab.

I was asked to come and help, and I agreed at once. If you had ever lived with a man-eating lion around, you would realise what a ghastly predicament it is, especially when living under such primitive conditions as these people were, and surrounded by bush and scrub and

long coarse grass still not ready for burning.

If I had ever refused to respond to an SOS I could never again have looked an African in the face without shame. I had the experience and the equipment coupled with the sincere desire to help these people whom I looked upon as my friends. How could I refuse?

We set off and paddled across to the lake shore, where we left the canoes and set out for the chief's *kraal*, about three miles away.

Chief Feira was rather a remarkable little man. Small and lightly boned, slim and with delicately chiselled features and tiny hands and feet, one would never think he was more than half his actual age. He frankly admitted he had lost count of all the wives he had had in his life so far, though he had eleven at this time. He had not the remotest idea as to how many children they had presented him with but they were numerous.

I cannot refrain from telling you of an amusing incident in this connection. On one occasion when I was in his *kraal*, chatting to him, I was playing with a nice little boy of about twelve years of age, a most attractive little fellow. He loved to come out with me when I was hunting buffalo and carried a cartridge bag with my pipe and tobacco and other odds and ends in it. I was very fond of him. I asked the chief whose son he was. The chief looked at him for a moment and said he did not know. Then he asked the lad.

The little fellow smiled, his bright eyes twinkling, and replied:

"Yours, Father."

The chief placed a hut at my disposal, and my gunbearer, Saduko, as usual shared it. My cook and his lad found other accommodation. About an hour after dark, Feira came to our hut accompanied by another man and told me that the same woman who had previously faced the lion had heard the beast under the platform in her garden. She had called out and told this man, who was sleeping in a similar shelter not far away, that she could see the lion when she looked down through the poles that formed the floor of her shelter. He called back to tell her to keep quiet and said he would run to fetch me.

It was very plucky of him because he was not far away, and there was, of course, a path running from these shelters back to the *kraal*, beaten out by their own feet as they went backwards and forwards between the village and the lands. And the lion would naturally use this path also. However, all was well and he arrived safely with his news.

I immediately went back with him to the lands. I need scarcely add that the chief came,

too. He had a most paternal attitude towards everybody in his *kraal*—they were probably all related to him in some way or another.

There was no sight of the lion when we got there. We could see his fresh pug marks all over the clearing in which the woman had her shelter; but at night it was not possible to find where he had left it. My shoot-lamp had a narrow concentrated beam which was not suitable for such work. It was intended for more distant work.

It was almost a certainty that the lion would have taken the path, but outside the clearing the path had been worn smooth before it dried. It showed no tracks of any sort. Perhaps in daylight it would be possible to see in which direction the brute had gone. So, telling the woman not to worry and that she was quite safe so long as she remained up there, and warning her not to come down until the sun was well up, we returned to the village, first taking the man back to his shelter and seeing him safely into it.

There were no alarms during the rest of the night. Next morning Saduko and I, accompanied by the chief, went out to see if we could find where the lion had gone. I was not very optimistic. The tall crops would make spooring impossible if he had gone through them, though I did not think this was very likely. Beyond the lands there was an ocean of long grass which the buffalo had not yet trampled down. It would be quite impossible to track an unwounded lion through that.

Some little distance along the path we picked up his tracks. He was heading out towards the grass. The path stopped short at the edge of the lands: it had only been a faint track for the last hundred yards or so anyway, and the lion's tracks were no longer visible. The buffalo grass stood about shoulder height, though the seed heads stood from a foot to eighteen inches higher.

PANIC STAMPEDE

Shortly before we came to the edge of it I saw some white egrets fly up over it and then settle back again. Almost certainly there were buffalo there. Egrets are a very sure indication of the presence of buffalo, when they fly up like that and then settle again. They keep with the herds to feed on the innumerable insects the buff stir up out of the grass as they move through it. The birds can often be seen riding on the backs of the big black beasts. They also pick off the ticks and lice that infest their hosts and which are the reason the buffalo must have their regular mud-baths.

As we could do with some meat, and as I wanted to give the chief a beast, I made over towards where I had seen the snow-white birds. There was no difficulty in the approach, apart from that of forcing a way through the grass. One did not have to worry about noise, provided it was only some sound natural to the veld and not any metallic noise. The buff made plenty of noise themselves, trampling down the grass and feeding.

I shot two of them before they realised what was happening. The rest stampeded and quickly were lost to view in the grass. It had only been a small herd of about fifty or sixty head, so that they had not yet trampled down much of the grass. The two would be ample for the present, so I let the rest go. We then returned to the *kraal*.

No word of the lion reaching us, I suggested to the chief that the woman take her children back to the *kraal* and I and Saduko would sleep in her shelter, taking it in turns to keep watch, since the maneater had on two successive nights appeared there. There was just a chance that he might come again. We did so, but our vigil was fruitless.

TRAIL OF PERIL

We spent another two or three days there, but it would appear that the lion must have killed some animal, because there was no news of any human kills. I doubted very much if he would have been able to kill anything big on account of that missing paw. The only game in this stretch of country were buffalo, waterbuck, some warthog, and a few reedbuck.

I returned to my base camp, because I had left some of my boys there and I wanted to shoot a buffalo for them, and see that all was well with them.

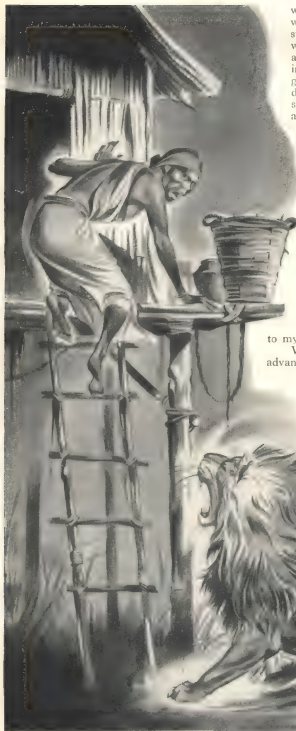
The next day I went ashore to hunt. My little lad, Friday, a born hunter if ever there was one, begged me to let him take a prowl with an old rifle I never used, but with which I taught him to shoot. I had never allowed him to shoot any dangerous game, but he could go out whenever he wanted to and knock over a small buck for the pots. This pleased him enormously, boosted his confidence and also his prestige among his pals and all others who knew him.

He was also allowed to use my shotgun for duck and geese when I was busy amongst the big fellows; but I did not fancy the idea of him wandering about here with that infernal maneater somewhere around. However, Friday assured me that he would only prowl around the more open forest and scrub close to the lake shore.

On the west side of Lifumba there was a fairly narrow piece of flat land covered with *mopani* forest. Practically no grass grows in *mopani* forest and there are plenty of clear open spaces with small clumps of bush here and there. It is favourite country for impala, those most beautiful of little buck. I suggested he go there. There was little or no chance of him bumping into the maneater in that sort of country.

I went off in the opposite direction. Having shot such buffalo as I wanted, and arranged for all the meat we needed, to be brought to the landing place where I had left my canoe, Saduko and I made our way back there, promising the men that I would arrange for the big canoe to be waiting for them by the time they arrived with the meat.

In due course we came to the little path



She glanced behind her and saw the lion crouching, about to spring up.

which led down to the landing place and we turned along it. In places, where the surface permitted, I could see that someone with small feet, very small feet, had only a short time before passed along the path in the same direction as we were going. I gradually began to feel uneasy. There did not seem to be any reason why I should; but I have long learnt not to argue with that feeling. The only possible danger there could be here would be the man-eater. I had not shot and wounded any buffalo. As there was no other hunter in the district, it could only be the lion.

On my right there was a stretch of short grass which led down to the lake shore. There was a slight rise beyond it covered with light forest and scrub. To my left, and immediately beside the path, there was another extent of open forest but with much scrub and with four- or five-foot grass growing between the scrub and palmetto. Visibility in there was nil as far as lion was concerned. Yet that lion must be somewhere in there. He was not in the short grass to my right or I could have seen him.

With my rifle at the ready, I slowly advanced. I had only taken a few paces when

I saw his tracks on the path in front of me. He had come out of the scrub on my left where there happened to be a stretch of thin soft sand, almost dust, along the path. His pugs were plain, and I could easily see that he was missing the paw on his off-fore. His pugs were superimposed on the footprints of whoever it was that had so recently passed along there.



It was a nasty predicament for me. Was the lion actually stalking the walker, or was it merely a coincidence that he happened to be so close behind him? I doubted the latter. Not at this hour, surely.

I would have liked to hasten along in the hope that I would be in time to interfere, but perhaps I was too late anyway. The lion might already have killed, in which case he might be feeding very close to the path and would resent being disturbed. And then a sudden, horrible thought occurred to me. Could it possibly be little Friday? Who else, with such small feet, would be walking along this path all by himself? It led nowhere but to the landing place.

I knew that Friday usually had his pal accompany him on these little hunts of his; but there were only the two of them in camp and, knowing Friday as I did, I felt pretty sure he would have told the other lad to stay there so as to be sure to have a pot of tea or coffee ready for me and Saduko whenever we got back. He often did that. It had not occurred to me to tell him not to go alone today.

And yet surely he would not be here. I had heard a shot some considerable time ago, and it had seemed to come from over there where I had suggested he go for the impala—it could only have been Friday.

DESPERATE SITUATION

I felt I just had to take the chance. A hunter seldom looks behind him, and I knew that Africans do not worry about danger that is not apparent. I also knew that they rarely have this inner intuition that warns of imminent danger. No matter who it was, I simply had to push along and hope to be in time. I knew I would never forgive myself if it was Friday and I allowed him to be killed because I was being too cautious. In spite of the strong sense of danger close to me, and fresh pug marks of the maneater on the path in front, I hastened forward.

I was very fond of Friday, one of the finest little fellows I have ever met. I did not run because I might have need of a quick shot, and I did not want to become winded; but I walked just as quickly as I could. Like all native footpaths, this one twisted a bit to avoid obstacles, and I could never see more than about twenty-five to thirty yards ahead. Then I turned a corner around a bush and came into view of the lake. There was a clear stretch here of about fifty yards.

Friday was about halfway across it, and he was staggering under the weight of a young impala which he was carrying across his shoulders, and between the legs of which he

had tied his rifle. Between us was the maneater. The brute was trying to hurry to get a bit closer before making his rush.

The lion must have realized that his missing paw was a great handicap (he had without doubt missed many a seemingly easy kill because of it). He had to limp badly as the injured leg was still much too sore to be used.

It was a difficult situation for me. Friday was in the direct line of fire and I could only put a bullet into the lion's hindquarters. That would surely cripple him; but things can sometimes go wrong, and I had been hurrying. I might slightly misplace my bullet. It wasn't good enough.

I dropped to one knee so as to get a level shot and shouted. That did it. The lion spun around to stand broadside-on and look back the way he had come: Friday also stopped and looked back. My rifle spoke and the maneater dropped with a soft-nose bullet slap through his shoulder. He never budge again.

Friday's face was a picture!

It seems that he had shot an impala out of a troop of them, but his bullet had gone clean through and wounded a young one standing immediately beyond. The first one had been killed outright, but this other had run. It was clear that the impala had been hard hit or he would not have left the remainder of the troop.

Friday had, of course, followed. It had been a fairly long chase and the little buck was dead when the lad found him. Then, as he was closer to the landing place than to where he had left his canoe, Friday had brought the little buck here. He had intended to leave it and then return to collect the first kill and his canoe. He had forgotten all about the lion, and had not the foggiest notion that the brute had been following him and was just about to rush him.

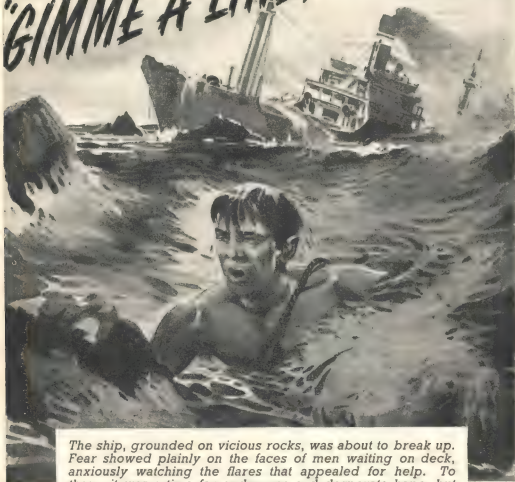
I back-spooled the maneater to see just what had happened. As well as I could reconstruct it, he must have been lying-up about ten yards from the path. Then his nostrils had been assailed by a curious mixture of scents: man, buck, and fresh blood. The breeze had been blowing across from the path to where he was lying. He must have joined the path very soon after Friday had passed but not before the boy had turned a corner around a bush.

Maneaters will always try to ambush their quarry if they possibly can, and it could be that this one was hoping that Friday would halt for a few moments and so give him a chance to slip up past him and lie in wait; but, fortunately, Friday did not stop.

John Taylor tells many dramatic stories, of which this is one, in his book, "Maneaters and Marauders" (Frederick Muller, 16s.).



"GIMME A LINE, MISTER!"



The ship, grounded on vicious rocks, was about to break up. Fear showed plainly on the faces of men waiting on deck, anxiously watching the flares that appealed for help. To them, it was a time for endurance and desperate hope, but to Chuck it was a moment for folly born of fearlessness. . . .

GO to blazes!" said Forster. He was like that. One of the most truculent, fearless, toughest and hardest-swearing seamen ever to sail out of Liverpool. He was a "hard-case" marine fireman who couldn't read or write, but could swear with splintering vehemence.

He didn't stand much above five-feet-six, yet the man that he had just directed to purgatory was a big-boned, whisky-wild giant with blazing eyes, and fists of granite; but he knew Chuck Forster, and he did not argue. He'd learned many dockside fights ago

that Chuck packed a punch that would hole a tug.

I knew Chuck from way back. He had been on the *Lusitania* when she was torpedoed. He'd picked up three children, handed them into the boats, and then swum around looking for more.

Ashore, he himself had been picked up more times than anyone could remember, and usually it took four policemen to handle him. Things were noticeably quieter in Liverpool when Chuck was at sea.

On this occasion though, we were in New York,

By TOM McGRATH

having a drink just before joining our next ship, the *S.S. Meteorite*. What a masterpiece of a misnomer! She was an old tramp, about half as fast and twice as ugly as a Liverpool tram, but had been converted into a survey ship. She had all kinds of scientific instruments and machinery on board, and was equipped with laboratories.

We were a real all-nations crew, though far from united.

I'd signed on as quartermaster.

We sailed from New York with a couple of dozen scientists on board, and were bound for London, where we were to pick up some more. It was just about the most motley bunch ever to be assembled together in one tub and, naturally, there were small differences of opinion.

Chuck, of course, was less approachable than ever. When one of the scientists asked him about his work, Chuck simply said, "——!" and left it at that. It was bad enough, he thought, to have so many — foreigners aboard, but scientists as well—that was a bit too —— much.

"With any —— luck," Chuck confided to me, "the first bit o' rough an' them —— perfessers will be washed overboard, —— test-tubes an' all."

We steamed across at a steady twelve knots, the "perfessers" taking the temperature of the sea at intervals, making tests and bookful of notes. Some of them were up most nights, taking bearings on the stars.

The passage across the Atlantic was uneventful, until we neared the Irish coast and a wall of clammy, grey fog, thicker than Chuck's hide. The ship slowed right down, and the siren blared mournfully every few seconds. It was just like the moo of a cow I once saw hit by shrapnel.

The fog seemed to wrap everything up, deadening sounds to an eerie faintness, and giving us an uncomfortable, shivery feeling.

FEAR IN THE FOG

The ship began to take long, slow rolls, and the skipper sent me along with the second mate to take soundings. The second said the old man was getting uneasy. Most deep-water captains are the same. Once they near a coast, they are apt to get a touch of nerves, and it affects the deck crowd.

Every time we took a sounding and showed him the "arming" of the lead, he would look at his chart and alter course a few points.

After we had been steaming dead slow for an hour, the old man gave orders to stop the ship.

The fog swirled thickly around us, and the uncanny stillness and silence was intensified by each lamenting cry of the siren. The ship had now begun to roll heavily, and the whole crew began to wonder, and to worry. Except Forster. For him it was just another thing to swear at.

You could feel the instant fear that ran

through a ship. It was an unforgettable and chilling experience. I could see it in the white faces of the men as they loomed up out of the fog, and in the grim, anxious face of the old man.

Before we had time to start dwelling on our destiny, the whole ship shuddered from stem to stern, and through the woolly blackness came the dreaded, rasping, grating sound that all sailors hear in their imagination when fog descends.

We were aground.

The mate groped his way to the ship's telegraph and rang "Full astern." The propeller thrashed and churned in the murky water, but the *Meteorite* didn't budge. It was as fast as a bollard.

There came the clatter of men running on the iron decks towards the bridge, and a confusion of shouts that sounded strangely distant.

"NO NEED FOR PANIC!"

"Pass the word along!" the skipper shouted through his megaphone. "All hands on the upper bridge!"

Orders were given for flares to be lit and everybody, scientists and crew, packed the bridge—everybody, that is, except the chief engineer and his second, who were still down in the engine room.

The skipper had to roar to make himself heard above the pounding of the sea against the ship, and the dull booming that was now reaching our ears.

"There's no need for panic," he cried. "We're ashore somewhere around Bannan Bay. When the fog lifts, the coastguard will spot us. The radio is calling for help, but no boat could live among these rocks. It will be a case of breeches-buoy. The ship will be a long time afloat before she breaks up."

I doubt if there was a seaman aboard that ship who had not been thinking of rocks, angry seas, breeches-buoys and the possibility of the ship breaking up, yet it was not until the skipper had spoken, that we really appreciated our predicament. It's funny how you can have fears but refuse to acknowledge them. As soon as those fears become common, however, all your illusions disappear.

We were in trouble: Supposing the fog didn't lift; supposing, if it did, the coastguards couldn't get to us. They were the thoughts that ran through our minds, and within seconds half of the crew began groping their way towards one of the boats on the weather side; but as soon as they reached it, they knew the skipper had been right. A boat wouldn't last one minute in that fog-blanketed maelstrom.

They stumbled back to the bridge, looking sheepish.

Soon the dynamo gave out. The chief engineer reported that the donkeyman was badly scalded, and that the engine-room and stokehold were flooding rapidly. We got the donkeyman into the saloon, where the steward gave him first aid and made him comfortable.

The fog had begun to thin out a little, and the light around the ship was getting brighter. Banks of smoky mist collected and hung low around us, but we could see between them.

The old *Meteorite* had finished her voyaging. She was listing heavily on a strand of rocks that looked like the teeth of some monstrous, ravening animal. The water all round was seething, the tumbling waves capped with hissing foam.

We continued burning blue flares and at last, from the shore, there came a burst of answering white flares.

"They've seen us!" the mate shouted.

"Rig a block on that port samson post, Mr. Owens!" sang out the skipper. "Keep all your small line handy, too. We may need it."

The fog banks lifted and the mainland loomed into view. Less than a quarter of a mile away, on a bluff headland, stood the coast-guard station. There were signs of activity up there. Chuck was standing by my side as we strained our eyes to penetrate the fog.

"They'll—well have to hurry," he said. I nodded. A strong nor-west wind had sprung up, and the ship was beginning to break.

The coastguards fired a lifeline into the rising wind, but it fell short. Again and again they tried, with the same result. Once more that feeling of uneasiness coursed through the ship like a storm wave. If neither boat nor breeches-buoy could span that tantalizing gap between the doomed ship and safety, we were booked for Davy Jones's locker.

The old *Meteorite* was taking a spiteful pounding from the leaping seas, grinding herself against the rocks and taking in water alarmingly fast. Fear showed plainly now on the faces of all of us—again except that of Chuck Forster. He stood watching the vain attempts of the coastguards to get a line to us.

He spat over the side with practised precision, then shouted to the skipper.

"Gimme a line—mister. I can swim like a—fish. If yer don't—then I'm going to save my own—life!"

"Don't be a fool, Forster," the skipper roared back. "It's sheer suicide. You won't make a yard in that sea."

"——" said Forster, and began stripping off his dungarees. He took a coil of signal halyards, looped the end around his shoulders, and plunged into the boiling sea before anyone could restrain him.

"Pay out the line, for Pete's sake!" cried the mate. "Let him have plenty of slack!"

I took on the job and started to pay out. Nothing could be seen of Chuck for a time; then the mate, using the glasses, said, "I see him! Pay out, pay out, man!"

Two of the A.B.s had given a line through the block on the post. This was bent on to the halyard line I was slackening away.

At last we saw Chuck. He was being tossed and buffeted against the rocks, and smothered by the seas. He clambered on to a rock and motioned to us to pay out plenty of line; then he was swept back into the water by a mountainous breaker, and lost to sight.

THE SHIP BREAKS UP

The mate and the skipper swept their glasses around the area, but Chuck was not to be seen. We waited in an agony of silent suspense, while every second the ominous grinding of the *Meteorite* on the razor-toothed rocks served to emphasize how desperate was our plight.

"He's gone!" the mate faltered, as he surveyed the stretch of leaping water through the binoculars. "There's no sign of him. We should have stopped him, the crazy scouse!"

The coastguards on the shore began running down to the beach, and at that moment, Chuck's head bobbed up again.

"He's there!" the skipper cried. "He's made it!"

The coastguards hauled Chuck out of the water, and signalled for us to attach a heavier line to the halyard. They soon had the breeches buoy rigged, and we got the donkeyman ashore first, then, one by one, we all followed. A few minutes after the skipper left her, the *Meteorite* broke up.

On shore, the scientists crowded around the bruised and battered Chuck. We knew better, but they wanted to thank him for his courageous act. After all, he had almost certainly saved the lives of everyone aboard; but for him, we might all have been feeding the fishes.

The "perfessers," however, weren't really Chuck's cup of tea, and when they'd finished pouring out their thanks to him, marvelling at his strength and courage, congratulating him on his fearlessness, he looked up at them with sea-reddened eyes and said simply, "Go to blazes!" He was like that.





Mangaia Island has seen few changes since the author arrived there many years ago.

"Money isn't everything—but very nearly," claim the cynics. This view might have been shared by the author when he arrived, penniless, on a South Sea isle. But happiness lay ahead. . . .

The Meats' at the POST OFFICE

By EDWIN GOLD

MY life on Mangaia, the only independent island in the Cook Islands group, has been a very happy one, although I arrived here many, many years ago as a ragged beachcomber.

The first friend I made here was a Mr. Exham, the newly-arrived assistant headmaster of the local school, and that friendship has blossomed over the years which have seen me become a respectable trader, while my friend has reached the exalted status of Administrator.

His career has taken him all over the Pacific, but he would always find delight in his periodic visits of inspection to this lovely island which, even in the jet age, jealously retains its ancient tribal customs and landhold.

During his early days on Mangaia, the teacher became a ciné-camera enthusiast, and seemed to spend all his leisure hours capturing the picturesque beauty of the island and its people.

Some time ago, Mr. Exham returned as our own Administrator and, in a reunion chat with him, I happened to mention the moving pictures he had taken twenty years previously. My interest was shared by others, and the outcome was that the Administrator decided to put

on a free film show. Soon all the island was talking about this exciting event.

Several days later, all paths seemed to lead to the great cargo-barn where the village's Big Events took place. Here it was that dances and charity shows were held.

Hundreds of islanders packed into the barn, and all eyes seemed to be drawn towards the diminutive paper screen, hung, in its wooden frame, on the wall of the shed.

Most of the audience squatted on the ground, but a few lucky ones, myself included, had been specially invited to attend. Seats had been reserved for us, precarious perches on old orange boxes.

The Islanders chatted happily, but quietly—until the screen was illuminated; then the noise was terrific, as everybody started shouting, laughing and pointing to the circle of light. The entire police force of six tried to quieten the gathering, but their efforts were unavailing. The crowd shouted them down and gave them three hearty cheers. An important chieftain barked his orders—but was ignored.

It was decided to start the show despite the babel of sound. Within seconds there was

complete silence. The beauty, the miracle of coloured, moving pictures held them spellbound.

Soon, however, the audience was able to recognize faces and places, despite the fact that the pictures were taken twenty years previously. Their rapture was childlike as they explained to all and sundry that "there is me—see me."

I was highly amused—until I recognized a raven-haired youth in a grey tropical suit, accompanied by a slim little Maori wife, as—myself! My hair is whiter now; my wife is a grandmother—and not so slender.

The show continued until curfew at 9 p.m., by which time the films about our own island had convinced me that my trader's life was one long round of romance.

In that show, I had seen administrators now out of office, chiefs long gone to their last home, ships that sail no more, and the revival of events that once had stirred the islands.

As I told Mr. Exham afterwards, when thanking him for the show, I would gladly have paid ninepence for admission, had this been charged. Laughingly he demanded then the ninepence, but—and this is typical of our isolated life—it was "between boats" time, and I couldn't raise the sum!



The author, Edwin Gold, who discovered that poverty and happiness can live together.

When I arrived home, I found that I had been locked out of doors by my wife, her playful way of showing resentment at having been left to guard the compound and trade post while I, like a *takata* (single man), went off to a show.

However, she was soon placated by the news that she was to be a guest at the next showing of the films, to which she would be taken in the Land-Rover vehicle which was the current nine-day wonder of the island. Of course, like all ladies going to a big occasion, she had to have new raiment, and a pair of new sand-shoes—size three.

Remembering that film sequence of her, slim and beautiful, taken so many years ago, I could deny her nothing.

Yes, life is very pleasant on Mangaia, but a white resident settling there after years of city life is apt to miss just one thing—fresh meat.

Hollywood films and cheap novels have spread the idea that on Pacific islands the folk revel daily in greasy banquets of roast pork or fowl; but I have never seen such festive meals except on Christmas Day or New Year's Eve.

Most of the meat eaten on Mangaia comes out of tins. It is hard to recognize as either beef or mutton and, loaded with brine and preservatives, defies much improvement by feats of cooking.



When the screen was illuminated, the entire police force of six could not quieten the ear-splitting babel of the laughing, gesticulating natives.



(Above) The supply vessel *Maui Pomare* arrives with Mangaia's meat—and other necessities. (Left) Although they handle very little money, these lovely Cook Islands girls can find nothing to be sad about.

Bloodstains on the back of a man's shirt tell his neighbours that he has just carried home the joint. Meat day usually causes some friction in the domestic scene. The husband dons a clean shirt to greet the ship's arrival—and then ruins it with animal blood as he carries the joint home.

The arguments put forward by the complaining wife are seldom heard, however, for her husband is usually busy, hammering apart the frozen sausages.

On rare occasions, the ship brings more than meat.

A couple of years ago, for instance, we were brought cubes of water. There had been a serious shortage of water, and islanders had to journey to a muddy little inland creek for their household supplies; the use of this water incurred some risk of typhoid, for it was impure.

When the ship docked husbands collecting the family meat were offered a great lump of the rarest thing on Mangaia—ice! The huge cubes had been mains water, frozen in Rarotonga. That day my little grand-daughter made Mangaia history, by being bathed in imported water.

A supply of good water is scarce and valuable on many Pacific islands; when the rain tanks are full, everybody is happy.

When they are empty, the only place to find pure water is with the meat—at the post office.

The only "fresh" meat we get is brought to us by ship from Rarotonga, head island of the Cook group. This meat, most probably imported months previously from New Zealand, has been stored in the "Great Freezer" at Rarotonga.

As soon as we learn, over the radio, that a ship is coming, we place our names on the meat order list at the "butcher's"—the local post office.

This is because freezer-meat is regarded as parcels post material, and is despatched to us care of the Resident Agent, who is also the postmaster.

As soon as the ship bringing the meat is sighted, everybody rushes home for a sugar sack, which is the recognized way of transporting the neck of mutton or "pong" of sausages from the butcher's to the home.



Is There Treasure In

HELL

Deadly black mambas, vicious leopards, hungry crocodiles and an incredibly difficult terrain all conspire to guard one of the world's best-kept secrets. Is this indeed where King Solomon's fabulous wealth originated? This is the story of how the author set out with some companions to probe the mysteries of "Hell."

By HENRY WESSELS

THERE is a place called "The Hell" in the nearly inaccessible mountains in the Calitzdorp area of Cape Province, where, it was rumoured, a few Boer families settled many years ago, after most of their counterparts had left that southernmost part of the African continent "to escape the English."

Lately one or two enterprising journalists ventured into this "lost" valley and brought proof of the existence of the hitherto rumoured recluses.

I was to learn, however, that there is another "Hell," and only a few hours' drive by car from Johannesburg, the Golden City. At first I was rather sceptical about these stories which I regarded as the usual "tall tales." A journalist friend persuaded me to join him in an endeavour to reach the new "Hell."

We were told that it was to be found in the Lowveld somewhere beyond Middelburg, which is just over a hundred miles from Johannesburg.

Since the Lowveld is widely known for its variety of poisonous snakes, in particular the feared black mambas, we very wisely decided to undertake this trip in June, the heart of the South African winter, when snakes hibernate.

It was bitterly cold on the Highveld when we set off one June morning on our adventure. We reached Middelburg just after sunrise, and

started immediately making inquiries after the "road to Hell."

All these country folk had heard of the fabulous place, and the many intriguing legends that surround it, but few had ventured into the mamba-infested valleys through which one has to climb in order to reach this well-named place.

The stories we heard from the old-timers in Middelburg varied, and some bordered on the impossible, we thought. These tales served to fire our imagination even more and our next step was to try to get someone who could direct us to this mysterious place.

The best we could get was a pointer in the general direction of "The Hell" and advice to inquire at the mill about twelve miles northwest of Middelburg. Even here, virtually at the back door of our goal, we could obtain only with difficulty any indication on how to reach it.

We had no trouble finding the mill amid a few native huts. In a cloud of dust our car scattered chickens in all directions and this unusual disturbance brought the old shopkeeper to our car at the double. Here again we could elicit a mere pointer. We were, however, making some progress and were delighted to hear from our new friend that we had less than twenty miles to go.

Our next stop was at Farmer Goosen's place for further instructions. The same reception awaited us, with one difference though: Farmer Goosen very kindly offered



The author, Henry Wessels, photographed in "The Hell" in the near-inaccessible Calitzdorp mountains.

to join us, as he had never seen "The Hell" either, and with typical *platteland* hospitality made us at home. After the traditional cup of coffee we set off, still in the car.

Our first shock came suddenly when Mr. Goosen opened a rusty, old gate which creaked loudly in obvious rebellion against being opened after being closed for so long.

This old gate meant the end of comfortable riding, and very soon we regretted not having traded the car for a couple of horses. The going became tough and the poor car was swaying like a ship in a heavy swell.

I was ready to bet that no four-wheeled vehicle had risked this road for the last twenty years. Most of it had been washed away and in other places outcrops of rocks and boulders made progress well nigh impossible, and only our enthusiasm and determination kept us going.

Periodically we had to stop the car and remove some of the outsize boulders. The bush was becoming thicker, and after battling over one rocky hill after another we eventually reached the summit of a fairly large hill, and here we had to leave the car and set off on foot. Slowly the landscape began to change, and we were descending into thicker bush.

It grew warmer and we shed our heavy overcoats and soon started perspiring freely.

After a hike which seemed to last for hours we reached the summit of a large and bushy hill and there, hardly distinguishable amongst the deep bush of a valley below us, we saw the thatched roof of a lonely native hut.

A new determination fired us and we climbed down the fairly steep side of the hill to the hut. This was as far as Farmer Goosen knew the way, and now we would have to depend on the lonely, old native to guide us further.

This fellow must have been very old indeed, for he stooped, his face was badly wrinkled and his short hair—white.

His suspicious attitude nearly shattered our hopes. For a long while he looked us over through wizened, old eyes and answered expectantly.

after what seemed an eternity of suspense, asked:

"And why do the White masters disturb an old man in his peace?"

"We have come here, *Outa* (meaning old man) to ask your help. You see, we are looking for 'The Hell' and have been told that you are one of the few who know the way," we answered expectantly.

Mention of "The Hell" seemed to bring new life into the worn, old body. In silence the old native turned his head to the west while a mystifying smile came to his face.

It was with a distinct feeling of guilt that we broke in on the old fellow's dreams.

I prodded him gently. "*Outa*," I asked, "Will you help us?"

Another pause. He sighed and answered: "Yes, *Morena*, I will show you the way." Needless to say his answer delighted us.

We were anxious to continue, and following *Outa* in single file, we moved in the general direction of the hazy cliffs which beckoned in the distance.

So far our progress had been fairly good but suddenly a deep gorge confronted us. A carpet of rich green covered its narrow bottom, but in the middle of the plush green the water of *Helspruit* (Hell's Stream) glistened ominously.

We looked questioningly at *Outa*.

"What now?" we asked.

"There," he pointed to some lofty peaks,

about a mile away as the crows flies, "is The Hell."

To our consternation, however, he explained that this deep valley in front of us was but the first of a few we would have to cross.

The sun was low in the heavens and we realised that for the time being our objective was out of reach. Yet those lofty and hazy peaks held much promise.

"Unless you are thinking of sleeping in these wilds tonight we shall have to go back now," said *Outa*, shattering the peace.

On our way back to the car we stopped periodically to glance back at the deep gorges now enveloped in a blue haze, and made up our minds to return soon.

Quite a few months passed before I had the opportunity to again visit "The Hell." In the intervening time I had gained much more information.

Shortly before my second attempt a couple of daring youngsters, inspired by the prospects of reaching there in the most unorthodox way, set off down the Olifantsriver in a light canvas canoe.

At a spot near to where Helspruit flows into this crocodile-infested river, their canoe was shattered in some rapids and they barely managed to reach the overgrown river banks.

They wandered about through the thick undergrowth for a few days without any food, and here a search party found them in a state of near-collapse. Their ill-fated adventure made the headlines in the Johannesburg newspapers.

My second assault was carefully planned and I discovered that there existed an easier way to reach our objective. I followed instructions and found that the road wound its way to the crest of a mountain where we left our cars.

We walked straight ahead for about two-hundred yards and then, very abruptly, the whole country seemed to fall away at our feet. There, below us, stretched the Lowveld in a beautiful carpet of green.

The scene which confronted us was an astounding one. The countryside viewed from this one-thousand-five-hundred-foot escarpment between Middelburg and the Loskop dam, was a scene of indescribable splendour, comparable with the lochs of Scotland. Here we stood, above the mighty canyons each with terrifying precipices. Down there was "The Hell."

It was impossible to ascend at this spot so we retreated for about half-a-mile and started making our way down the first lonely valley. We came to a spot where several fountains formed a crystal-clear pool of water which reflected our images with needle sharpness.

After a brief rest we made our way forward and soon started up against the slope of a high hill. I was anxious to test the truth of rumours I had heard of gold having been mined in these lonely valleys, and constantly stopped to view the surrounding mountain slopes through a pair of binoculars.

Soon I discovered the first tell-tale sign of a mound of rock which indicated that excavations had taken place. I hurried over rocks and through bush to the spot with my heart almost in my mouth. Now I was convinced that I was on the way to the place, here in these mysterious valleys where there are still unmistakable signs of the gold workings of long ago.



Members of the expedition swim in the seemingly bottomless pit of the "lost valley," upon which the sun never shines.

Very soon we found the first evidence. A length of rusted rail proved beyond doubt that we were moving in the right direction. Not very much farther we discovered the first tunnel blasted into the mountain-side. Many boreholes were visible and several ominous looking holes in the rock proved that this had been part of the gold workings. I triumphantly recorded all this with my camera.

Now my thoughts sped back to my long and arduous investigation into the legends that have been passed from generation to generation of local natives.

Was it true then? Was there gold in abundance in those deep and isolated valleys? All these thoughts flashed through my mind.

There was the old native witch doctor who related the story of a certain native tribe who discovered the secret of "The Hell" and took with them a fortune in gold. This tribe was later attacked by an envious neighbouring tribe, and only the chief and a few of his *indunas* escaped the resulting massacre.

They fled with their fortune in gold to "The Hell" and were lost in its maze of valleys. The golden wealth was hidden in one of the secret caves in which the area abounds. To ensure that the cache was kept secret, the chief instructed his most trusted *induna* to assegai his accomplices to death.

Later the chief unexpectedly clubbed the remaining *induna* so that he joined his colourful ancestors. Nothing was ever heard of this chief again and his remains have never been found.

Fantastic? Perhaps, but remember Africa is a land of legends and mysteries, many of which may never be solved.

Many stone implements have been found in the deep caves in this area, implements which undoubtedly dug some of these caves and served to deepen others.

Stories have been passed down through the ages of visits of caravans from the far north, with strangely attired people and horses with two humps on their backs.

I suggest that these caravans came from King Solomon's vast empire; otherwise how would one explain the amazing similarity between the scenes described in the book: "King Solomon's Mines," and those at "The Hell"? After all, it has been proved that South Africa's ancient natives traded in gold.

Although the whole area has, through the course of time, become known as "The Hell" the actual "Hell" is a spot deep in the huge, mysterious gorges with their unscalable



Rusty and battered rails were found at the spot where gold had been mined many years before.

heights, where Hellspruit changes from a docile Lowveld stream to an icy and seemingly bottomless pit, which few people have ever seen.

Further proof of the wealth of this area is found in the offer which the late Sir J. B. Robinson, a very wealthy mining magnate, made to a farmer named Koch before the Boer war, in 1900. He offered Koch the then fabulous figure of £65,000 for his farm, and farms in those days could be had for the asking.

My third visit took place after quite a long spell in which time my thoughts constantly returned to this place of mystery. Only on this third and very determined attempt did I actually reach the heart of the place and was able to take some exclusive photographs.

It was after hours of climbing over tremendous boulders and fighting my way through virgin bush that I was able to reach the "gate" of "Hell." It is a grotesque tear in the mountain, as if a mighty hand had ripped the mountain asunder.

Hellspruit disappeared into this tear and I decided to follow. Quickly I had to shed my boots and roll my trousers up. For a few hundred yards it remained like this, and then I had to resume my battle with colossal boulders and wade through deep pools. However, my determination knew no bounds.

Every fifty yards or so Hellspruit abruptly

disappeared around a protruding mass of mountain and made its way even deeper into the centre of the labyrinth. This game of hide and seek could not last indefinitely. After what seemed like an eternity of battling against Nature I scaled another boulder and risked it through a deep pool, and was confronted by the legendary "heart" of "The Hell."

Here was peace and quiet as one can only imagine it in a serene dream. Here was a world on its own; a world which was reluctant to share its secrets with the outside. It was as though Nature had pitted all her wits against any intrusion into this secret spot of hers.

I remembered the deep, isolated and overgrown valleys, the immense boulders which gave the impression of having been planted very meticulously in the "gateway," the deep and mysterious pools of water, abysmal chasms which defied even the efforts of baboons to scale them.

Then, of course, there were the live "dissuaders" which Mother Nature had planted: the stealthy leopards which roamed the bush and the dizzy heights, and last but by no means least, the deadly black mambas.

I sat on a boulder right here in front of the icy pool which formed the "heart" of "The Hell." My effort over the last obstruction had forced perspiration on to my forehead, but now a cool and refreshing breeze, which came through that frightening tear in the mountain, played over me. I am told that this is an ever-present breeze, and as regular as the sun which rises over this awe-inspiring scene every morning.

Later two of my friends joined me and in quiet amazement we three sat there. At this spot it is easy for man to grasp his insignificance and to humble himself to his true stature.

THE ENEMY SWOOPS TO KILL

—and the British ace manoeuvres desperately to meet the attack, but finds that he is out of ammunition. Famous fliers recall nightmare experiences when

FEAR WAS THEIR CO-PILOT—appearing in next month's **WIDE WORLD**, which will also feature:

THE MYSTERY OF THE MELANESIAN

—which invites lovers of the sea to solve the most intriguing problem since the eerie affair of the *Marie Celeste*.

MODJADJI THE RAIN QUEEN—telling of a fabulous figure who held dominion over numerous African tribes, although isolated from them by secret ritual and macabre practices.

These and many other true tales of travel and adventure make next month's issue an outstanding number.

ORDER YOUR WIDE WORLD NOW

Not many eyes had been privileged to take in what ours were now seeing and never before had anyone risked a dip in this icy and seemingly bottomless pit. My friends must have read my thoughts, for a knowing glance passed between them, and then with a nonchalance reminiscent of one shedding his garments before having a bath, they undressed and waded into the water.

I not only wanted proof of what I intended to tell the world about this lost world, I wanted exclusive pictures. Here, now, was the opportunity every photographer prays for. I would be able to produce a photograph of two men swimming in "The Hell." The icy water refused to entertain them for more than a few minutes, but long enough to allow me to take the picture I wanted so badly.

CANYON OF SCREAMS

Slowly and reluctantly we started on our way back past the barricade of boulders and pools until we finally reached the "gates of Hell." From this spot it was a further hour's battling before we reached a place where the perpendicular walls sloped gently away and made it possible to start climbing back to the civilized world.

As if trying to deal us a last, telling blow, Mother Nature confronted us with this apparently endless ascent. I have never been so tired and washed out as I was after that climb which sapped every ounce of strength we could muster. It was sheer will power which enabled us to reach the top.

There below us Helspruit flowed, undisturbed and ominous. To the right of us the mighty Olifantsriver glistened like a silver ribbon in the late afternoon sun. This is one of the few remaining places, within easy driving distance of Johannesburg, where game, crocodiles and hippo abound.

There is one old croc, so the legend goes, that is the grandfather of them all. Very few people have had the privilege to see this slime-covered old monster.

We ventured nearer to the brink of the enormous escarpment where the Highveld comes to an abrupt end and the Lowveld commences. We stood more or less right above the "heart" of "The Hell."

It was here, so the legends say, that a well-known native chief sat in judgment over members of his tribe who did not toe the line. Amid heart-piercing screams which echoed and re-echoed through the mighty canyons, many a native was flung headlong into this beckoning gorge.

It is said that if one has the courage to stand on this mountain top at the dead of night, the fearful and spine-chilling cries can still be heard, whilst the wailing and sobbing is carried forward on the night wind.

Eerie? Yes, but "The Hell" still beckons and I hope to unravel some more of its mysteries before I am very much older.

I MIGHT be there today—or, more likely, my blistering skeleton would be lying, dismembered, on the burning sand by the green and scummy waterhole. The heat of such places is quite indescribable, unless you've worked as a stoker and know the meaning of great goutts of hot air, unbreathable and withering.

It just happened that I had a little too much sense to listen to the tempting voice of John, so I stayed where I was, in Southern Rhodesia, and left the emeralds alone. A month later, I was a game ranger in Bechuana-land and the impetuous and reckless John had vanished again on his restless travels, leaving me to the minor dangers of buffalo and lion. I've never heard from John, and I don't know where he went, but before he left he told me the priceless story of French Pierre, Emperor of The Emeralds.

Pierre was a dapper little Frenchman with black eyes, like darting bees, and quick, expressive hands. He and John met in Mombasa, that port of adventurers, and recognized one another as kindred spirits.

Outwardly, however, two men could hardly have been less alike. John was very fair, and bulky, wearing a blond frown, and having a self-willed mouth. He was untidy, restless and completely undisciplined.

French Pierre, however, was the acme of self control. Every little Gallic movement was a calculated gesture of expression. His small, black eyes missed nothing. He must have been rather like some small and predatory bird, a fierce little hawk-eagle—quick to pounce.

He watched the thought of treasure burn in John's fiery blue eyes, and then heaped new faggots of information on the blaze. Cynically amused, he must have overdone his glib story of the emeralds—for John was not a fool. John knew that he needed a fellow Anglo-Saxon to make the venture, if he wanted the treasure—someone who thought as he did, and was not so inscrutable as this little French adventurer with the hard, black eyes and the frankly-confessed deceit.

John came south with the ship he was helping to sail, met me in Durban, and travelled with me up to Rhodesia. He then spread out in front of me his tale of treasure, so that I lay awake in the hotel in Salisbury, and thought hungrily of the emeralds in Eritrea, guarded by death, but there for the taking—as they are today—if I would take the risk.

All we had to do was journey up the east coast of Africa, as a thousand adventurers had done since the days of the Phoenicians. In the Red Sea we would slip ashore—but here is the story of French Pierre, who did just that. . . .

"We were two," said French Pierre. "We were brothers—thinking as one, as true brothers should, but, alas, my brother Paul has grown very fat. Riches have ruined him. He has lost his nerve. He has got himself married to a dubious Marseillaise, and is raising long, yellow marrows and fat, black-eyed children. He has taken root in the gentle soil of France like some

FRENCH PIERRE

cabbage—and he is not to be shifted. *Mai non*, Brother Paul is become a vegetable.

"But me," he continued, spreading his thin and wiry arms in the neat black suit, so untropical in the Mombasa evening heat, "I am an adventurer still! I am of the blood and strain of the Greek heroes. I am *un voyageur*—one who cannot take root but must forever venture over the exciting face of the untamed world beyond the shores of France!

"You understand, *m'sieur* John? Yes, I think you do, for you, also, are adventurer. For me, wild places call, and French Pierre replies, welcoming the challenge."

Pierre took a sip of his drink and eyed John with his beady look, in which was hidden a smile—and something more, something shrewd and calculating—as though he were bargaining in some mental market-place.

"Yes, wild places beckon and Pierre responds—but a man needs a friend. There are many things that even the bravest may not attempt alone. These emeralds of which I speak—they are such a venture—a venture for two brave men, that a man's back may be guarded.

"Only once in many lifetimes does such treasure glitter at a man's feet. For years and for miles, scores of years and thousands of miles, men such as you, *M'sieur*, and men such as myself, seek wearily, but with unflinching hope, for the pot of rainbow gold—and this we found, my brother and I.

"Before the finding of this treasure Paul, my brother, was

The Sultan, imprisoned in his Eritrean palace by murderous intrigue, revealed the secret of his emeralds to the wily Frenchmen, and started them on a desperate mission that was fraught with peril—yet not without its humorous situations. . . .

By PAUL SMILES

also my friend in adventure. We marched together in everything—until we came upon the emeralds. That was the end. After that, Paul invested his share of the bright green jewels in such things as marrows and little Pauls—turning the wonder of the great adventure into vegetables and brats! Even now it is unbelievable that a man could sink so low. Marrows and babies!

"Now me—French Pierre! Ah, my share of the emeralds, wrung with sweat and blood out of that hell-hole of hot sand, I have spent—gloriously, *m'sieur*, gloriously. Indeed, *La*

Belle France has grown tired of me. Let me tell you about these emeralds of Eritrea, and we will venture together."

The volatile and incredibly tough little man looked out wistfully over the moonlit harbour of Mombasa. A dhow was coming in under sail, chasing its own fleeting shadow down the milky moonpath. The sea lay quiet beyond the coral reefs. There was just enough breeze at this hour to move the dhow, and fan a brow.

Below the club, the noisy voices of Africans—saved only by the music of the Kimvita tongue—a brand of Swahili—cut through the

and the SULTAN'S EMERALDS



The night was stabbed with violent flashes as the raiding Habash approached.

night. The dark silhouettes of the palms turned modern, dusty Mombasa into that place of legend, first to hear the music of the pipes of Zanzibar, when there were no motor cars, and the ancient port was nothing more than a bridgehead for raids into the mysterious hinterland of lion, of wild elephants' teeth, and of chained slaves.

French Pierre, respectably correct in his neat black suit, was not out of place. He was, so patently, simply another crafty Phoenician, or a cut-throat Arab out of the sea, or a raiding pirate from Marseilles, with the same black, darting eyes they all have. He sighed.

JEWELS GALORE

"Ah, *m'sieur* John—do you know The Coast? But of course. You have helped to sail that windblown orange crate down from England. No matter that you have lost everything but the keel and the captain—and she a woman!

"But I take you the other way, *mon ami*—northwards, beyond Kenya, past Somaliland, to round Cape Guardafui into the Gulf of Aden, and through the Bab El Mandeb and thus—into the Red Sea. Its lazy waters are white on the waste of shore that is Eritrea, a coastal hell, a shoe-string of a country, fit only to tie the shoes of Shifta and Habash—when such caricatures of humanity wear any footwear at all. That is the place where the treasure lies!"

He spread his hands and shrugged, a little smile playing about his mouth.

"Paul and I had some very good reasons for slithering out of Toulon, *m'sieur*—you comprehend? Well, from Toulon we slithered to Rhodes. From Rhodes we did some more slithering until we arrived in Alexandria—where everyone slithers.

"From that place, with the grand name and the dirty smell, by bribery, by corruption and finally by damnable dhow, we slithered down that ill-begotten Red Sea coast. You may have thought that that derelict schooner that you have so bravely helped to sail this far was purgatory—

m'sieur, but try a dhow, just once—try an Arab dhow! Only an Arab would do it—an Arab, or a Frenchman no longer popular in *La Belle France*.

"We stopped at one of those inexcusable little ports—no doubt to enable the villainous Arab captain to indulge in more corruption—a place named Ras Kasr, I think, but no matter. Here, Paul and I left the dhow secretly, to avoid paying twice the demanded fare, with the alternative of having our throats cut by that wily scoundrel, the captain—an Arab who had shown no faith in our native integrity, having none in his own.

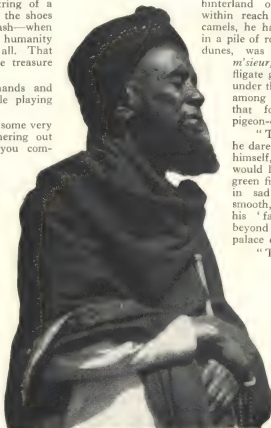
"Afoot, then, *m'sieur*, and penniless. Of course, we still had our French *élan*, our Gallic verve, our—what is the word? Ah, charm, no? Paul, especially, was very good with this charm. He carries it as some men carry a knife, hidden but alert, ready for use. If the world is an oyster, Paul can open it.

"A woman, whom he got to know very quickly, told him very slowly, night after night, *m'sieur*, about a little sultan, farther down the coast, who had a couple of acres of palm trees, too many wives—and no money. Even so, it seems that this unhappy little sultan was not a complete fool, however. In the

hinterland of his sandy domain, within reach of one of his mangy camels, he had a secret. In a hole in a pile of rocks, amid the hot sand dunes, was a treasure—emeralds, *m'sieur*, squandered by a profligate god of fortune to glitter under the savage sun of Eritrea among the weathered rocks of that forgotten desert—great, pigeon-egg emeralds!

"This little brown sultan, he dare not venture after these himself, *non, non*, not if he would live to profit from their green fire, *m'sieur*—for he was in sad fear of having his smooth, brown throat slit by his 'faithful' subjects, once beyond the walls of his coral palace on the coast.

"These back-of-beyond savages were largely Shifta and Habash, Fuzzy - Wuzzies, with a lust for violent living. They were bandits from birth, *m'sieur*—a people who delight in other people's sudden death—surpassed only by their ingenious women, who can keep a man alive long after he has begged for death. The least of them will murder an



A few Arab chiefs are immensely rich, most are poor ; but all are fiercely proud.



Over this barren and inhospitable landscape French Pierre and his brother, Paul, carried their green treasure. They had lost their camels and their guide, and awaiting them, in his palace, sat an impecunious and avaricious sultan.

enemy soldier for his buttons. It is any wonder that this petty potentate remained in his coral castle—and remained poor, while the blazing, green treasures of King Solomon rotted in the backyard of the desert?

"The girl told Paul that what this sultan needed was a cat's paw to snatch a consignment of emeralds for him. For this, the little man was prepared to pay handsomely—with half the haul. He wanted the other half—the better half. Ironically, he had to trust this cat's paw, for he could trust nobody else.

"No doubt, when he got his share, he was going to slip away in the dark by dhow to Paris, and live as only a rich Arab knows how to live in the Incomparable City. And as long as the emeralds lasted, the Incomparable City would know how to treat him. In one stroke he was going to get rid of all his wives, become somebody of importance and be able to go to bed each night without wondering if he would wake up in the morning. Me, I sympathize.

"Paul is the great one for the girls and the information, but I—French Pierre—I am the planner, the practical one. What more practical than a wooden box of hand grenades, left over or mislaid from the war? I retrieved them from the dark and odoriferous shadows of a small shop in a side street, where they sold remarkably fine coffee.

"I exchanged my gold English watch for them—the watch that had once belonged to a British colonel of infantry who trusted me unwisely when we were both serving in the Maquis. Thus, *m'sieur*, Paul and I, we marched down the coast, carrying the grenades and two fairly good Army rifles, until we found the coral

palace and the little sultan with the nervous, brown throat.

"We had slept overnight in the desert, within sound of the restless and mournful surf, to await the dawn before approaching the palace. Such a palace it was, set back from the sea about half-a-mile—a green oasis, like an emerald itself—with the white coral walls gleaming pink in the early sun. Seabirds cried above a litter of dhows, moored to a palm-bolt jetty.

"Suddenly, fierce-eyed horsemen flashed down to meet us, sand spurting from under the hooves of their mounts. The white garments billowed about them as they surrounded us, and the horses rolled their eyes and pranced, showing red mouths under the cruel Arab bits. The tribesmen were coldly polite, but we were prisoners, *m'sieur*, and they marched us into the coral courtyard, shrieking and waving their long-barrelled guns.

TRAIL OF A FORTUNE

"We swirled to a halt in front of the little sultan, who was seated in the shade by a fountain. We knew him at once by the girl's description. He eyed us with contempt, and we stared back in insolence. He beat around one bush, and we beat around another, until he tired of the game and sent his savage henchmen away. Even then it took us another hour to get down to business.

"The best stones must be among my half of the emeralds," he declared, firmly.

"*M'sieur*, we are in your hands," I replied. "Give us a guide, two camels that have not

been ridden lately by Satan, and a handful of dates, and we are off to make your fortune—the fortune that will unlock the gates of Paris for you!”

“He gave us a calculating look out of his sly, brown eyes but supplied what we needed. We set off at night, by the light of a crescent moon—Paul, the guide, the hell-bound camels and myself, Pierre, the adventurer. We rode all night. We had misgivings every time a jackal yelped. The murmur of the sand under the camels’ feet was the only sound we made.

“We arrived at a place of rocks, in the midst of which was a disgusting waterhole bordered with green scum. We tied the guide up and tethered the camels to thorn bushes; then each of us slept a while, the other standing guard until dawn. By daylight, we found emeralds sticking out of the rocks.

LIVING ON LIZARDS

“Paul became alternately hysterical and inarticulate with excitement. We made a good day of it, then tied the guide up again, and put him to sleep with the camels, for he and they had much in common, principally smell, and I am a fastidious man, *m’sieur*.

“Thus we worked for three days, living on the dates and the foul water, and, when these were expended, upon lizards that we caught in the rocks. We cooked the lizards with some green berries that grew nearby, and which the guide said were good to eat. He exaggerated. Paul got dysentery, and I flatulence. The lizards made us lean and savage, and the berries gave us no peace, even at night.

“On the fourth day, one of the camels died out of spite. The temperature never dropped below one-hundred-and-twenty degrees.

“On the night of the fifth day, the Habash arrived. Paul, as an *ex-sous officier*, and myself as a one-time Maquis, we made hell for them among the rocks. The night was stabbed with the violent blast of rifle muzzles. The Habash left many dead whom we did not bother to bury.

“In one week we had acquired a fortune, but there were ten fortunes still to be had. We gave it three more days and two nights, dying on our feet, delirious, demented, but obsessed with the green promise of emeralds, as the sun caught a hundred scattered facets among the burning rocks.

“The spirit of Ali Baba hovered over that accursed place, and was later joined by the spirit of the guide, whom we had forgotten to untie.

“On the last night, the Shifta materialized out of the moonless dark. They thought we could not see to shoot. They were right. We could not see to shoot, but Pierre, French Pierre, knew a thing or two. The night-splitting, orange fury of a Mills grenade is magnificent. Its ear-cracking voice is terror itself. We blew the Shifta to pieces—and our remaining camel as well!

“*M’sieur*, we walked back! We carried the emeralds scattered about our weary fever-racked bodies, hung about also with what was left of our hand grenades. We staggered across the desert to our little sultan and cast at his slipped toes all our emeralds. He eyed them greedily, so we told him about the Shifta and the hand grenades, showing him one, just in case he had a practical idea for another disposal of the emeralds.

“With some haste, he then made a fair division of them, and when he had finished I produced our trump card. I opened the heel of my shoe and gave him five splendid emeralds, better than all the rest put together.

“He was deeply touched. He gave us a dhow and blessed us in farewell, and we made good speed towards the nostalgic shores of *La Belle France*. If we had waited overnight, I’ve no doubt he would have found a way to cut our throats, but as it was, we parted to the sound of the sonorous Arabic *au revoir* in our ears.

“*M’sieur*, I cannot go back alone to this Eritrean sultan. He would crucify me. Why? When we got to France, we opened the hand grenades and removed the very best emeralds—much better than any we had given the sultan.

“Yet, you know, the thing that really upset him was that when he arrived in Paris, to unload his own emeralds, his eyes snapping with excitement and the Adam’s apple in his brown throat bobbing with nervous strain, he found the market flooded. Nobody in the great French capital wanted the sultan’s emeralds, *m’sieur*, nobody!”

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ORDEAL ALOFT

PUBLICATION, in our June number, of the amazing Daniel Minne story "Trapped by the Tailplane," the personal account of the ordeal of a French paratrooper whose chute became entangled with the plane from which he was jumping, over North Africa, prompted George Young, of John Ruskin Street, Walworth, S.E.17, to write the following.

"When I finished this story, I said to my brother, who already had read it, 'It's hard to believe that a man could survive such a grim experience.'

"In reply, he smiled mysteriously, handed me the morning paper, and indicated an item under the heading 'Trapped by parachute.'

"It was a report from Pau, in France, about a French sergeant, L. Lavaut, whose parachute became entangled with the wings of an aeroplane after he had jumped, in a military exercise.

"For half an hour he was hauled through the air several thousand feet above the ground, before he was rescued by comrades in the plane, who lowered a rope to him:

"Back at base, when questioned about his ordeal, Sergeant Lavaut told reporters that he was worried only by a terrible thirst, and supposed that the 160 m.p.h. wind gushing into his face had 'dried him up.'

"How's that for coincidence?"

MOSQUITO MANSION

Although many Australian aborigines scorn the idea of shelters, they are forced, on occasion, to seek protection against the attacks of mosquitoes.

For this purpose, they erect communal huts of poles supporting strips of tree bark. The whole tribe, often numbering as many as a hundred men, women and children, sleep side-by-side on a raised platform within the hut.

Fires, built around the hut, send up clouds of smoke that envelop the building and frighten away the dreaded insects.

"Personally," writes Harry Richards, of Ashford, Kent, who sends the accompanying

CONDUCTED BY THE EDITOR

photograph of one of these 'mosquito mansions,' "I'd prefer the mosquitoes to the threat of being suffocated by the pungent fumes given off by the burning of the community's rubbish."

MOUNTIES TO THE RESCUE

A mystery that has puzzled the world for more than a century, may be solved very shortly, because of the vigilance of the famous Mounties.

The crew of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police helicopter flying over the Arctic spotted, on King William Island, two stone cairns.

It is believed that these may have been erected by the explorers who, in 1845, sailed from England to the Canadian Arctic under the leadership of Sir John Franklin, never to be seen again.



Acrid smoke drives the mosquitoes from this Australian aborigine dwelling. It would also keep reader Richards away!

The party, one hundred and thirty in number, were searching for the North-West Passage, and were officially presumed dead in 1853.

When their leader died, in 1847, the survivors set out on foot to reach civilization, because their two ships were gripped by ice.

Skeletons and some of their possessions were found, and also some messages written in ink. The latter suggest that the explorers may have wintered with the Eskimos.

A party of scientists is to investigate the cairns that were discovered initially by the Mounties. Perhaps they will yield the secret that has so far eluded man.

HEIGHTS OF AMBITION

Proudly a Birmingham reader reports on a mountaineering project organized this summer by the Army Mountaineering Association.

"Although I enjoyed the story 'Go ahead, it's your mountain,' which appeared in the July WIDE WORLD, I was disappointed that there were no climbers of the Gloucester Regiment in Captain Mike Banks' team.

"I have had the honour of serving with the 'Glorious Gloucesters,' and take pride in their many climbing achievements.

"Only this summer Gloucester's Captain H. R. A. Streather led an expedition to the Hindu Kush mountains in North-West Pakistan.

"I hope I shall see a report on this venture in the columns of my favourite magazine."

PEACEFUL CONVERSION

"If ever appearances libelled a race of people, surely they do in the case of the native Fijians," writes George Cheesman of Hornchurch, Essex.

"I have never, in all my travels, found a more lovable people, courteous and considerate in the extreme.

"Yet their menfolk can look extremely fierce, and, if there were trouble, I can think of no better ally to have by one's side.

"I found particular pleasure in Reg Otley's fine story 'A Murder Was Arranged,'



Fiji war drums now summon worshippers to church.



Even the dirty fishing boats on the Menam River near Bangkok become majestic when the breeze fills their sails. (See "Long May It Billow" below.)

which appeared in the July issue. As I read it, I seemed to be back once more in that wonderful group of islands.

"Indicative of the Fijian's eager acceptance of a peaceful way of life is the fact that the *lali* (a drum made from a hollowed log), now is used to summon worshippers to Church."

"I enclose a photograph of a drummer sending out his call to the Christian congregation."

LONG MAY IT BILLOW!

"I have always found it a gratifying thought, in these days of mechanical wonders," writes Mrs. Joan Prizeman, of Ottery St. Mary, Devon, "that sail is still very widely used, and is, if anything, increasing in popularity."

"This last fact is demonstrated by the first-rate sailing stories that my whole family read avidly in WIDE WORLD.

"I have noticed that in recent issues we have had photographs of canvas being used in the propulsion of boats, trains and sand-ships—tin-lizzie-type of vehicles that use sail to move along beaches.

"Although I have travelled very extensively, and seen many wonderful things, I maintain that there is nothing more majestic, magnificent and magical than the sight of a sailing ship, gliding apparently without effort, over tumbling waters.

"Even the ugliest craft afloat, as may be seen in the busy ports of the Orient, have some claim to beauty when the winds carry them about their lawful occasions.

"Here's to sail, and long may it billow!"

GRUMBLERS ANSWERED

Reporting on the good work carried out by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Mr. Percival Woodrow, of Wandsworth, S.W., writes:

"I was amazed, earlier this year, during a visit to Southend-on-Sea, in Essex, to hear holidaymakers grumble about being expected to make a donation to lifeboat funds, when visiting the vessel at the end of the resort's long pier.

"Apparently the critic did not know that the R.N.L.I. is supported by voluntary contributions and hoped that getting away from London for a couple of weeks would guarantee him freedom from flag-day collectors, hospital rags, and other charitable activities, and thought that, because he had never seen a lifeboat launched, these vessels were just showpieces, in fact, 'just another scheme to dip into our pockets.'

"I was very happy to be able to inform him that, in 1958, for the third year in succession, lifeboats of the Institution were launched more than seven-hundred times, and were instrumental in saving four-hundred and fifty-nine lives.

"I sincerely hope that he now regards his measly 'tanner' as being well-spent!"

THEY ATE THE POLICEMAN

A report reaching me from Port Moresby announces that cannibal hillmen swooped recently upon the village of Matuari, in New Guinea, and killed and ate the local policeman.

The officer, named Obu, was responsible for reporting any trouble in the village, and was a very conscientious worker—much too conscientious in the opinion of a few natives, apparently.

Believed to have come from a cannibal tribe of about three-hundred people, the attackers snatched the village constable from his hut, and chased the rest of the villagers to the Australasian Petroleum Company's camp at nearby Bwata.

Brigadier D. M. Cleland, Administrator of Papua and New Guinea, has organized a police hunt for the murderers, who live in difficult, sparsely populated country.

This is the first known case of cannibalism in Papua for three years. Explaining the native attitude, Mr. W. Dishon, Senior Native Affairs Officer says:

"These people do not realise that, for every administration man they kill, there are boatloads more to take his place."

Perhaps that is the very thing for which they are hoping!

THANKS, MR. SMITH!

Many readers have written to thank Mr. Hector Smith, of Edinburgh, for recommending others to see the film "No Room for Wild Animals," discussed in the July WIDE WORLD.

Most laudatory was the letter from Albert L. Lock, of King's Lynn, Norfolk, who writes:

"One cannot offer too much praise to Dr. Grzimek and Michael Grzimek, who produced this wonderful movie—with its important message to all animal-lovers."

We are indebted to Dr. Grzimek and his film company for the loan of the accompanying picture, taken while the production was being shot in the Belgian Congo.

It shows the Doctor (right) and Michael with a group of pygmies who assisted them in the making of a film which is winning worldwide acclaim.

TONNAGE TALK

The letter published in our July issue from Mr. Kenneth Crawford, of Ayr, has brought forth a large number of strongly worded protests at his criticism of the British shipbuilding industry.

Mr. Geoffrey Davies, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, writes:

"I am surprised at Mr. Crawford, who professes to be a knowledgeable 'old-timer.' For all his experience of the sea he still measures the value of ships built on cold statistics of gross tonnage.

"Surely the true value of a ship lies in its life-span, and the way in which it handles. I maintain that British ships are now, as they always have been, the finest in the world."

Another letter, in similar vein, comes from Mr. G. L. Wright, of nearby Wallsend.

"I would like to remind you," he writes, "of the remarks made by Mr. E. L. Hunter, chairman of a local ship-building firm, at the recent launching of a tanker.


"He said that the gross tonnage of merchant ships produced by Germany and Japan had been stimulated by their heavy war losses. To make an accurate comparison we should have to take into account the many ships built here for the Royal Navy. He concluded:

"The industry is manned and operated by British people, who are proud of their work and the industry they live by and serve."

A rather caustic letter, from an Uxbridge reader, who signs himself "Impatient," ends with the questions "Who cares anyway? Why can't we forget the sea and concentrate more upon gaining leadership in the air?"



Doctor and Michael Grzimek pose with Congo pygmies who aided them in the making of their celebrated film



**VIOLENCE,
BRIBERY AND
MASS HYSTERIA
MAKE THIS...**

The winner of a recent Palios leads the field around the last bend.

I THOUGHT I'd seen just about everything until I came across the Palios—which takes place twice a year—in early July and late August—in the ancient city of Siena, in Central Italy.

The city has a population of 60,000, but on race days at least another 75,000 people throng the place. Not so very long ago, I went along to see the event, but not realising the immense popularity of the race, I hadn't taken the precaution of booking a room, so I slept in the park—with 5,000 other visitors.

The temperature on the day I arrived had been 103 degrees, so park-sleeping was no hardship. Not that anybody had much sleep; they were far too excited. Early next morning buses and trains arrived in scores, bringing all-night travellers from all over Italy. They

jostled in droves towards the Piazza del Campo, Siena's main square.

Any resemblance between the Palios and an ordinary race is entirely coincidental. In the first place, the two races celebrate Siena's most important holy days, which is rather funny, considering how dishonest and ruthless a Palios is. To win it, the connections of one recent winner spent the equivalent of £14,000 in bribes, distributed among jockeys, rival owners and assorted nobblers. The extent of these and other bribes was common knowledge in Siena.

Yet the only reward for the winner was a large, silk flag, hand-painted with a picture of the Virgin Mary. The trophy hasn't changed in 700 years.

A week before the race about 20 horses—they spend

By JOHN LAFFIN

A RACE TO REMEMBER

A vivid eye-witness account of the oldest, craziest and crookedest horse-race in the world, a race in which every protagonist is liable to be bribed—or "nobbled" or even kidnapped or murdered—in which the jockeys belabour each other, and in which a horse that has lost its rider can "go it alone" and win.

the rest of the year pulling carts or *fiacres*—are tried out as racehorses, and the 10 best are selected for the event. Prior to 1720, as many as 25 horses ran in a race, but that year two jockeys were killed in the overcrowded field.

At a public drawing, each horse is assigned to a *contrada* or district. Siena has 17 *contradas* but only the largest are eligible to compete; for that matter, they are the only ones which can afford to compete. From the moment of the draw, the *contradas* become sworn enemies until after the race. Friend turns against friend, brother against brother—and in no mere spirit of friendly rivalry.

Each *contrada* goes all out to raise the money necessary to hire a good jockey and buy off competitors, to bribe fixers to tamper with rival horses and to pay a strong-arm squad to protect their own horse. The whole business of bribery becomes so involved that in the end nobody is sure who is buying off who.

I was told that, in one year before World War II, a jockey accepted bribes from the other nine *contradas*, and built up a handsome bank balance. He was smart enough to lodge it in Rome, so that when he came out of hospital, after the inevitable beating-up, he still had the money safe. Rumour has it that he emigrated to Queensland.

Nothing is left to chance in preparing for the race. At three o'clock on the morning of the big day, each *contrada* takes its horse and jockey to church, where they are solemnly sprinkled with holy water and blessed, while *contrada* members pray for victory. I was asleep when this ceremony took place, but I awoke in time to get a good front seat for the parade which followed the church blessing.

It was a fabulous affair. Every resident Siennese seemed to be in it, most of them in costume, together

with floats and bands and flag-wavers, called the *alfieri*. End-of-the-war hysteria had nothing on that parade, as it wound in and out of the narrow streets. At one time I counted ten different parts of it crossing various sections of the Piazza.

Eventually everybody finished up in front of the cathedral, where pairs of *alfieri* gave a spectacular exhibition of their prowess.

At eight o'clock, when the preliminary demonstrations had finished, the Siennese had been wildly active for at least five hours. I suspect that many had not gone to bed at all, but had spent the night drinking *vino* and working themselves into a state of frenzy.

The large square had been turned into something like an old-time stadium, by covering the paving stones with sand and sawdust. Prefabricated stands provided seating for the spectators. The outer rim of the Piazza formed the track, and the course for the race was three times around, about two miles in all.

At 8.15 the starter arrived. I could see him only with difficulty, as he was surrounded by a large force of *carabinieri* and troops. He had been under escort for a week, and would be guarded for a week after the race—until the losers also lost their anger against him.

In 1911, a *contrada* murdered the starter because, they alleged, he deliberately left their horse at the post.

In 1923 another starter's house was dynamited. Since that incident, starters have insisted on protection; even so, they are usually brought from some town remote from Siena.

Amid deafening screams and shouts, each jockey put on a heavy, loose, canvas jacket and some donned crash helmets. All carried a long whip of twisted ox sinew, called a *nerbo*.

The starter adjusted the rope barrier and the horses, all without



The author, John Laffin, who tells of a dramatic tournament that curiously links tradition with violence.

Each *contrada* sends its jockey, escorted by pages and drummers, to the cathedral to be blessed and to offer a prayer for victory.



saddles, were lined up. The jockeys were told to mount. This was also the signal for them to begin beating each other with the thong or the stock of their whip. Even before the race began, three riders were bleeding from their wounds.

Several times in recent years, many riders have ganged up on the favourite jockey, and beaten him unconscious at the barrier. The rules permit a substitute to be used, but naturally enough, he is never really keen about the race.

Shouting through a megaphone, the starter somehow managed to get the horses in a rough line. This brought about comparative silence, broken by a man to my rear who climbed on a wall, ripped off his shirt and screamed to everybody to admire his *nerbo* scars. It seemed that he once was a successful and popular Palios rider.

He got a cheer from the crowd, and one jockey, more emotional than the rest, called for a cheer from the riders. The old-time rider burst into tears, and blew kisses at the jockeys.

The starter shouted impatiently, and brought the jockeys' attention back to the start. He worked solidly for 25 minutes, abusing first one rider, then another. When everything

seemed to be set, a jockey who previously had been docile, would lash out with his *nerbo* or stand up on his horse and hold his hands high like a boxing victor.

Eventually the starter's persistence had its reward. As he dropped the rope, he ignited a box of blasting powder. It damaged and set fire to a stand, but nobody appeared to be hurt.

The thousands of spectators shouted, booed or jeered. Youths fired catapults. Nobody remained seated, and I had to climb to the rear, where I found a place on a wall. I held it against great odds, but my shirt was badly torn by excited Italians who figured that they had better title to the spot.

It gave me a good view of the race, which went uphill and downhill, and included some right-angle turns, thoughtfully lined with mattresses to soften the fall of any jockey who couldn't stay mounted.

For a distance of a hundred yards, one rider stood on his horse while he lashed his *nerbo* at his rivals. Spectators at the course-side grabbed at the horses and riders, trying to slow down everyone except the horse raced by their own *contrada*.

At the end of the first lap, two horses had lost their riders, but still they could win. The first horse across the line, with or without rider, wins the Palios.

In 1948, a canny rider deliberately fell from his mount. The horse was a Palios veteran, and knew every trick of the course, but was too old for the distance with weight on its back. The *contrada* fashioned a flimsy harness, knowing that it would pull apart if rival jockeys grabbed it. If this happened, the jockey was told, he was to take a tumble. If it didn't



Knights on horseback representing the *contradas*, parade around the course shortly before the race. Gradually, the crowd is brought to a fever pitch of excitement.

happen, likewise he was to take a tumble. The old horse won easily.

The deception became common knowledge after the race, but by then it didn't matter. Disqualification has no meaning in the Palios.

Towards the end of the race, some of the riders were looking badly mangled from *nerbo* lashing. The crowd's excitement had reached fever pitch. The instant the first horse crossed the line, members of the victorious *contrada* surrounded it, praising the jockey and protecting him against vicious attacks by the other jockeys and *contradas*. The riot in the Piazza was something to see.

Eventually the winning *contrada* was awarded the flag, and they fought their way out of the arena with it, followed by cheering, jeering thousands.

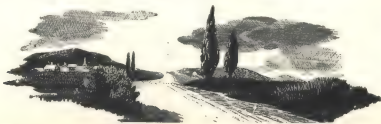
I wanted to ascertain the name of the winning horse, so I called at the newspaper office to check on this, but the editor turned out to be a *contrada* captain, and was away feasting. A friendly policeman told me that no paper would be published for at least three days; by then the editor might be sober again.

Siena quietened down a lot during the stifling heat of the day, but that night it turned out for the victory parade, which ended in another joyous riot. Stabbing, clubbing, scratching and biting, the crowd managed to wreck the Piazza stands as they screamed incessantly.

Despite the violence, I got the impression that everybody was having a wonderful time. The winning *contrada* paraded its banner from one end of the city to the other, but it must have suffered fearful casualties, keeping that flag flying.

The police stayed away from the festivities. I met a senior-looking *carabinieri* officer at a street-side café in one of the few quiet areas of the town. He was discussing the day with the café owner, whose only reason for not being involved in the celebrations was that he had a wooden leg.

I mentioned to the officer that the rioting seemed pretty fierce. He shrugged. "It is all in fun," he said. "To-morrow everybody will be friends again. To-day it is different. To-day, it is Palios."



I WAS BURIED

I HEARD Jack Wright moving behind me. He was saying something about the cesspool being in a bad way. "We'd better watch out," he was muttering, more to himself than to me, "it's likely to collapse."

I had gone forward about eight or ten feet, when I heard the crunching of moving sand, and as I turned to dive in the direction of the escape route, the whole world seemed to cave in around me. I had a sensation of falling, and something heavy struck me on the back. My eyes, mouth and nose filled with sand and dust.

As I plummeted forward, I almost lost consciousness for a moment; then I was groping in the smothering sand, and gasping for breath like a fish out of water. More than two tons of soft sand rested on my body.

I could not move, and as my fingers clawed at it, more and more sand tumbled down. I felt sure I was dying, but as the sand choked me I kept telling myself: "You can't die! You mustn't die! Think of the kids!"

I lay perfectly still, and slowly came to realise that there was a tiny air-space above my head, although the sand rested solidly on the rest of my body from the neck down. An excruciating pain was running through my right leg, which was twisted away from my body at an angle of about seventy degrees. I tried to straighten it, but couldn't.

Something seemed to be cutting into my leg just above the ankle. I guessed it was one of the eight-foot by two-foot metal plates used in the large cesspool to bolster up the shifting sand.

I could not twist my head, but had to lie face down with my nose little more than an inch, maybe one-and-a-half-inches from the sand, with one of the metal plates squarely above my head, almost touching my hair.

Exactly how many tons of sand pressed on that metal plate I did not know, but I guessed at two to three tons, and I felt that my time on earth was limited to minutes, or maybe even seconds, because if the sand shifted now, the metal plate would slowly descend on my head, burying my face in the sand, and smothering me.

My neck was becoming tired and my muscles were aching, from the strain of hold-

ing my chin clear of the sand, but I could not move my arms from under the sand, to get either hand to my face to support my head. I could twist my head from side to side, but on either side, not more than eight inches from my face, was sand, slowly trickling round the metal plate which lay across my head, and filling in the gap between the plate and me.

I am forty years old, but not so old that I was eager to die. I knew my chances of survival were practically nil, and I guessed that my mates up above, who were working with me on the job of repairing and stabilizing the walls of the cesspool, would have given me up for dead; but while a breath of life remained in me, I made up my mind to hang on to it.

It was around ten o'clock in the morning when the walls of the cesspool had collapsed on me, and I figured that about an hour had passed when I found that I could no longer hold my head up. My eyes were smarting from the dust, and I found my breathing slowing down as the oxygen in the little air trap above me was being used up.

I allowed my head to come down slowly until my chin touched the sand, thinking perhaps that I could rest my chin and so ease my neck muscles; but as my chin touched the sand, it began to sink down until the sand was up to my lower lip.

I lifted my head again, and for a moment thought about calling for help,

but how can anyone hear you if you are buried under tons of soft sand?

I wondered if the men above would simply give me up for dead, or if they would try to get to me as fast as they could.

If they tried to reach me, would their excavations cause the sand to smother me before they could clear me?

I considered these possibilities as I lay flat on my stomach, enduring the pain which tore through my right leg, the cramping agony in my neck and the torture of my lungs which gasped for fresh air.

If, I told myself, the men above were trying to get to me, they would have to come from the front, along the cesspool air-vent tunnel. They would thus reach my head or my hands first. My hands were stretched out in front of me, for as I felt I had flung them out in a wild, protective gesture.

I lost all count of time as my head began

Leslie Stafford, an employee of the Bakersfield, California, municipality, was working at the bottom of a 24-ft. deep cesspool when the sand collapsed, completely burying him. Four hours later workmen, risking their own lives, dug down to find him miraculously still alive, but trapped by his foot under a heavy metal plate which none of them could reach.

It was twelve hours before he was finally released.

This is Stafford's own story of his nightmare experience.

ALIVE

By
**LESLIE
STAFFORD**

to swim, and a few times I dozed off, not because I was tired or frightened, but because the foul air in the space around my head was making me drowsy.

I kept telling myself: "Don't go to sleep. If you do, you will never awaken."

I began to count, and I guess I reached five-hundred, maybe six-hundred, when my mind began to wander as if I were drunk.

I plunged my thoughts back twenty, thirty years to when I was a youngster, and I tried to remember all the things I had done, and all the people I had known. I began to reel off names, and became absorbed as I tried to connect faces to the names I spoke.

Possibly another hour passed. I wondered how much longer I could remain alive. I began to think of flowers. All my life I have been passionately fond of flowers, and now I tried to recall as many different species of flowers as I could.

When I tired of this, and found my mind returning to the theme of death, I began to think of different species of birds. Then I thought about the holiday I had promised my wife.

I kept trying to convince myself that the men would get to me in time, and I tried to avoid the hard fact that even if they did reach me, they would find it almost impossible to get me out. No one could get past me to free my right leg from the metal plate, and I could not free myself without a chisel or power saw.

Although I had no idea of the time, I figured that about three hours must have passed when I felt the sand trickling a little faster round the edges of the metal plate.

"Is it shifting in for the kill, now?" I asked myself. I closed my eyes and said a short prayer asking God to forgive me my sins.

Suddenly, I distinctly felt something touching my left hand.

Using every ounce of will-power that



"The whole world seemed to cave in about me as I plummeted into the smothering sand."

remained in me, I wiggled my fingers. I tried to clench my fists, but I couldn't. All I could manage to do was to wiggle my fingers—and that, I was told half an hour later, saved my life.

The men had begun excavating the moment the cesspool caved in on me and were working, as I had guessed they would, from the front. Someone had fetched the coroner, feeling sure that I must be dead, but my wife had brought our family doctor, because she would not believe that all hope was past.

She told me afterwards that throughout the whole operation, which took twelve hours and twenty minutes, she remained standing at the cesspool head, praying over and over again: "Please, God, get him out."

I felt something grip my hand, and although I could see nothing, I bent my fingers and felt them close on something warm and living—a hand.

The sand was trickling fast around me now, and then a hand was thrust through the sand, and a man's face appeared.

"Water! Water!" I croaked.

"Stafford's alive!" I heard someone say, in a voice that seemed to come from far away.

"Get him water!" another voice screamed.

I felt something touch my lips, and I opened them.

"Take it easy," I recognized Wright's voice dimly. "Try to twist your head a bit and swallow some water. We'll have you out of here in a little while."

I gulped down the water and whispered hoarsely, "My right leg is trapped. I can't move it."

The sand was scooped away and a life-giving breath of fresh air swept into the hole to me. I gulped it down like water.

"Hold my head up a bit," I pleaded with the man in front of me. He placed his hand under my chin, and I relaxed my neck muscles for the first time in just over four hours.

"How badly are you hurt?" Wright was asking.

I told him I did not know. "My foot is jammed tight. It must be trapped by a metal plate. It will need a chisel or power saw to get me free," I said.

"We can't get past you. You will have to do it yourself," replied Wright.

"Hey!" I heard someone shouting from afar. "Wright! Crawl out. The doctor wants to get to Stafford."

"I'll be right back," Wright promised me, and crawled out backwards. Then I saw the doctor as he crawled under the threatening sand dome to me, a small case in his hand.

"Hullo, Stafford," he said, trying to appear at ease, but both of us realised the danger which threatened us from the final cave-in.

"Are you in much pain?" he asked.

"It's my leg, Doc," I told him.

He took a small bottle from the case and a tiny glass which he filled.

"Swallow this," he said. "It will soothe you a little. I can't give you a stronger sedative because I don't want to put you to sleep. The men tell me that they can't get past you to your leg. You will have to free it yourself. They are fetching chisels, and someone has gone for a power saw. Your wife is above, praying for you."

The doctor took a bit of cotton wool, put

something on it and wiped the sand from my eyes and nose.

"I'm going now, so that the men can reach you," he explained. "But I will be back as soon as they give me a chance."

One of the men crawled in after the doctor had left, and held a bowl of soup from which he fed me. When I had finished, he began to scoop the sand away from my back and passing it along in a small bucket to men behind him.

It took more than an hour for the solitary worker to get my back clear of the sand. He helped me to twist around to a sitting position so that I could remove the sand from my legs, where he could not reach. Then I saw the broad metal plate which lay squarely with one edge biting into my leg.

"You will have to be careful," I heard Wright murmur behind me. "The sand might collapse, when you move the plate."

"You had better get out of here, Jack. If anything happens you will die with me," I warned him.

"I am staying with you," he replied. "Now, if you can break through the joint of the plate with the chisel, then you should be able to lift the right side high enough to free your leg."

I was breathing more freely now, as fresh air reached me. The determination to live was strong as I took the chisel from Wright. I placed it against the first bolt holding the central joint of the metal plate, which was spread across the tunnel-like cesspool.

If I could break through the three bolts, the plate would be in two halves, and I might be able to raise the left or right half sufficiently to free my foot.

I had given the chisel only two blows with the hammer, however, when the tool snapped. Another three chisels

which were passed to me, snapped in as many minutes. The bolts were of cold steel.

Someone passed down a power saw. I switched it on and brought it against the bolts, but the blade snapped almost instantly. Three more blades were passed down and snapped just seconds after contacting the cold steel bolts.

"It's useless," I heard Wright saying behind me. "We'll have to think up something else. How are you feeling?"

I did not reply. My head was spinning, and the agony in my leg was unbearable. Above



Wayman Halsell, who was lowered into the twenty-five-foot hole, and spent seven hours helping to free his workmate.

me the sand dome of the cesspool seemed alive, as grains of sand kept falling down on me.

I was certain that it was just a matter of time until the whole cesspool collapsed, and this time there could be no escape.

Wright crawled out and someone else crawled in with more soup. I had been down in the cesspool for seven hours already, and above, they told me, more than a hundred people were gathered around to give what help they could.

The doctor returned and gave me another sedative, and my wife sent down a message to tell me that she was praying and waiting for me above.

"The boss has sent for help," Wright said, when he returned. "They're bringing up a mobile crane. The cesspool hole, over towards your foot, is blocked by the fall, but they could scoop up the sand from above, with buckets, and get a steel cable down to you to hook around the metal plate, so that they can haul it just clear of your leg. Then we can drag you out."

"Why," I asked, "don't they scoop the sand out now, so that everything is ready when the crane arrives?"

"They can't do that," Wright replied. "When they begin scooping, the hole might collapse on you. There won't be time to get you out. They will begin as soon as the crane arrives."

It was ten-and-a-half hours from the first cave-in before the crane arrived. I had been buried under the sand with only a small air pocket for over four hours, and another six had elapsed since the men, who had come to fetch out my body, had found me alive.

"They're getting busy now," Wright reported. "There's going to be a lot of dust and sand."

"Why don't you get out?" I asked. "It's very dangerous down here. There's no point in two of us getting killed—"

"No one is going to get killed," Wright interrupted. "Now, lift your arms, so that I can get this harness around your chest, then we can drag you out backwards, as soon as the crane lifts the plate."

He fastened the leather strap around my chest, and I felt it tighten. Then I heard someone calling, "Okay, we're all set."

"Lie down. It will be easier on you," Wright said. "Grasp your leg and, as the

plate lifts, drag the limb free. Call out when it is free, so that we can start pulling you out."

Sand came pouring down the cesspool hole and enveloped me. I remember coughing and gasping for breath. I could see almost nothing in the sand and dust.

Suddenly, the lower part of the hole collapsed in a cloud of dust on my legs and lower body. For a moment I thought that it would smother me altogether. Then I heard someone shouting from above.

"Can you catch the cable down there?"

I realised that a serpentine thing with a hook at the end was dangling a few inches from me.

I sat up, and forgot my pain as I clutched at the cable, and began to dig around the plate with my right hand, burrowing a mole-like hole through which I gradually worked the hook and cable, until it protruded on the other side. It hung slack, and I found it easy enough to reach over the plate with my left hand, catch the hook and bring it right over the plate, and slip it round the cable.

"All set!" I shouted, hoarsely.

"Get hold of your leg, and start praying," I heard a man say behind me. "When the crane

lifts the plate, the whole works might collapse."

The walls of sand around me heaved dangerously, and sand and dirt began to rain down as the crane lifted the plate, and I tugged desperately at my leg.

Suddenly, I felt my leg move. I pulled again, and felt it free.

"Okay!" I called. "Pull away!"

This was the most dangerous moment of all, as the rope tightened around my chest, and I was dragged backwards.

I felt hands grasp my arms and someone saying: "Hang on, we are putting you in a bucket seat. The crane will pull you up."

Minutes passed, and then I felt the grip of the steel cable on the bucket seat, as it began to haul me up. I could not think clearly.

The night above was illuminated with a searchlight and many flashlights. People took hold of me and helped me out. Someone jumped at me, and I felt arms flung around me, and recognized my wife's voice as she wept: "Thank God, you're safe!"



The author's wife visits him during his long period of recovery in Bakersfield Memorial Hospital, California.

"THE TIGER" TURNS THE TABLES

The prisoner seemed friendly and amenable—until his chance came and then red-faced policemen changed their minds. . . . A WIDE WORLD reader describes one of the less glorious incidents of his career.

By R. J. OTTER

I WAS stationed in Calcutta, one of a group of twelve Regimental Police doing duty at a transit camp.

Into the cells we guarded—it was 1946—there came British soldiers who had gone absent without leave, Indian civilians who had committed some offence in the camp itself and, occasionally, prisoners due to be tried on more serious charges.

Among the latter was a notorious British soldier known in Calcutta as "The Tiger." Apparently he had been in trouble before, but on this occasion he had really gone the limit. He had tried, unsuccessfully, to hold-up the cashier of one of the town's largest stores, situated in Chowringhee—the "Piccadilly" of Calcutta. Military Police had captured him, and he had been brought to our cells to await trial by court martial.

While in custody, "The Tiger" was made to perform "prisoner duties" such as loading coal on to lorries, cleaning the cells, etc., but apart from that he had a pretty easy time of it.

One of my friends would walk him around the camp for exercise, and then bring him back to the *bosha* or hut that served as our guardroom. Before being returned to the cells, which were situated in a row just outside our hut, our prisoner would be permitted to sit at a table in the guardroom, and chat to us.

We all became quite friendly as he told us of many of his hair-raising exploits, and our verdict was that he was not such a bad chap after all.

One morning, after a particularly hot night when the mosquitoes, like miniature dive-bombers, had been more than usually active, I finished my tour of duty on guard and wandered lazily back to my *charpoy*,

where I sat idly glancing at the pictures in a magazine.

At about half-past seven the Burmese corporal, who was second-in-command of the guard, was detailed by the sergeant in charge to go over to the cookhouse and bring back breakfast for the guards and their prisoner.

For the next few minutes, I chatted with my pal Harry who was, as usual, complaining about the heat and the insects, while the sergeant, also with us in the hut, was writing



As quick as a cobra he spun around, a revolver gleaming in his hand. "Get 'em up!" he snapped.

up his report, no doubt certifying that "the night passed without incident."

We all glanced up as "The Tiger" walked casually into the room, but carried on with our talking or writing, as the prisoner's entry occasioned no surprise, especially when he sleepily rubbed his eyes and asked "Is breakfast up yet?"

The prisoner was permitted to walk freely from his cell to our hut, only a matter of a few yards, anyway.

A GUN IN MY BACK

When told that his meal would be arriving in a minute or two, "The Tiger" turned about and, as nonchalantly as you please, ambled towards the doorway—as if to return to the cells.

But suddenly, as quick as a cobra, he twisted around to face us. In his hand there gleamed a revolver, which must have been concealed in his pocket a few moments earlier. In true movie-style he snapped "Get 'em up!"

I was paralyzed with astonishment—and the sergeant, with mouth hanging wide open in startled surprise, seemed equally unable to grasp the significance of what was happening.

Harry, reclining on his clammy *charpoy* and scratching himself, treated the situation as he treats everything—as a joke.

"Put that thing down, Tiger," he drawled, "and stop playing around."

However, the menacing look on the prisoner's face left me in no doubt as to his intention—escape!

As our rifles and ammunition were at the far end of the hut, there was nothing for us to do but obey the demand of our "prisoner," only now it seemed that we were the prisoners. Sheepishly our hands reached upwards.

The sergeant tried remonstrating with Tiger, telling him that he was only making things worse for himself; but the man who firmly grasped the revolver just sneered and looked from one to the other of us, as if enjoying our discomfiture.

As we returned his stare, we wondered how on earth he came to be in possession of a revolver, and speculated upon what had happened to Lance-Bombardier R. Garry who was supposed to be guarding the would-be hold-up man at that moment.

Tiger ordered the sergeant, Harry and me to walk from the guardroom to the cells, in the order stated, while he walked behind, with his revolver close against the middle of my back.

He told us to put down our hands, but to "try nothing" or I'd "catch it for certain."

Beads of perspiration lingered on my forehead—not entirely because of the heat.

Already he was on a serious charge, I told myself. Would he risk going the whole hog and shoot a man, in a desperate attempt to escape?

When we arrived at the cells, the problem of Garry's whereabouts was solved for us. Despondently he sat in the cell previously occupied by Tiger. He looked very sorry for himself, and the poor fellow could not meet our accusing gaze.

We learned afterwards that the prisoner had told him that he had received orders to prepare the armoury for the colonel's inspection later that morning, and Gullible Garry (as he was forever after called) handed him the keys.

The three of us were herded into the cell with Garry, and ordered to stand facing the wall opposite the door.

"Will he shoot us all now?" I asked myself, wondering if Tiger had gone completely mad.

Then my thoughts switched to Nigger, the camp's little black spaniel that I had noticed wandering about outside the cells. If only Nigger had been a Rin-Tin-Tin, this would be its moment to spring to our rescue and win itself a medal. But nothing so dramatic occurred.

The key turned in the lock, making a dismal, "this-is-the-end" sound, and then we heard Tiger's footsteps fading away down the passage outside the cells, and towards the exit.

We turned about and saw him strolling nonchalantly towards the camp exit, where an Indian soldier stood on guard. This, of course, was no obstacle to Tiger, for passes had to be shown only upon entering the camp, and not when leaving it.

We could see Garry's rifle propped up against the corridor wall outside, but not within our reach.

Belatedly, I thought of writing a note, and affixing it to the collar of the spaniel.

PAYING THE PENALTY

After scribbling "Prisoner escaped—locked in cells" on a scrap of paper, we whistled for Nigger and sent it off with the order "To the *bosha*!"

It was on the dog's departure from the cells, however, that it was noticed by the Burmese corporal, returning from the cook-house with breakfast.

We were duly released by an irate regimental sergeant-major who made us feel that maggots were so much superior to mere policemen who lost their prisoner.

The alarm was raised, a hue and cry started, and Tiger was very soon recaptured in the crowded streets of Calcutta. Perhaps fortunately for him, he was not returned to our camp for safe-keeping, but to Fort William.

Poor Garry was reduced to the rank of gunner, and received twenty-eight days C.B.

My punishment was to be left with the recurring memory of a business-like revolver stuck in the middle of my back!



The Wide World Brotherhood

The Wide World Brotherhood is a fraternity of men (and women) of goodwill, linked by the common bond of a love of travel and adventure. It has only one rule—a solemn pledge to treat fellow-members as brothers and, if need arises, give them any help possible. There is no annual subscription; the only necessary expense is 5s. (US 70c.) for the gilt-and-enamel buttonhole badge (brooch for ladies) and certificate of life membership. The badge should be worn whenever convenient to enable Brethren to recognize one another.

Although only ten years old, the Brotherhood is represented in over seventy different countries and is continually increasing its strength.

NOTE: Although we are, of course, always glad to give in these pages such details as addresses of secretaries and other officials of WIDE WORLD Brotherhood Clubs, Groups and Branches, this does not mean that they are representatives or agents for the proprietors of the WIDE WORLD Magazine, or that they have any authority to make contracts or enter into any arrangements on behalf of the Company. Nor, although we are always keenly interested in the spirit and ideals of the Brotherhood and to receive news of the activities of Clubs, Groups and Branches, can we accept responsibility for their conduct.—George Newnes, Limited, proprietors of the WIDE WORLD Magazine.

HAVE YOU A TALE TO TELL?

R EPORTING on the activities of his club at Redhill, Surrey, Brother L. Harrison writes:

"Quite recently we instituted a monthly meeting for the purpose of yarn-swapping, and all members have been amazed at the number of thrilling exploits in which their friends have participated.

"I have been asked, therefore, to enquire on their behalf if it would be possible for the Brotherhood columns to feature tales of adventurous experiences submitted by members of the movement."

Acting upon the suggestion of Brother Harrison and his colleagues, we are now inviting them—and, indeed, all other Brothers—to send along the story of "My Greatest Thrill."

Because of space limitations, entries should not exceed 250 words, and the sender of each story published will receive one guinea.

All entries should be addressed to 'The Editor, Brothers' Stories.'

The feature may be continued for several months, dependent upon Brothers' response.

TOIL OR TROUBLE?

The month's choice in our "Pictures I have taken" series, falls upon the accompanying photograph, submitted by Brother Kevin Hilton, of Peckham, London, S. E. 15, who writes:

"I was very interested to read, in a recent copy of WIDE WORLD, a letter from Mrs. Millicent Bax, who compared the teenagers of Malaya and Britain.

"My picture, the best of several taken when I was based in Nairobi last year, shows how African children learn to make themselves

useful at a very early age. These boys and girls are seen clearing the ground in preparation for the construction of new huts.

"This early initiation into work results in great industry throughout their lives. They lead cheerful and contented lives and, significant point, there is no juvenile delinquency.

"No one in Britain would welcome the return of the bad old Victorian times, when, from the age of eight or nine years, children worked long hours in factories, etc. But one is left wondering if juvenile crime would be largely eradicated by the introduction of more constructional leisure activities, and fewer packaged entertainments."

CLUBBING TOGETHER

From four continents come reports of new branches being formed, and brothers inviting the assistance of fellow-members in getting groups firmly established.

Brother W. H. Ferris, of 86, Sutherland Street, Paddington, Sydney, Australia, writes to announce the formation of a new club in his district, and would like to hear from Sydney brothers interested in learning of its activities.

Proposing to form another Australian branch, is Brother Matthew Duncan, of Cruikston, Victoria Avenue, Claremont, Western Australia. He writes to invite help and advice from those interested in his project.

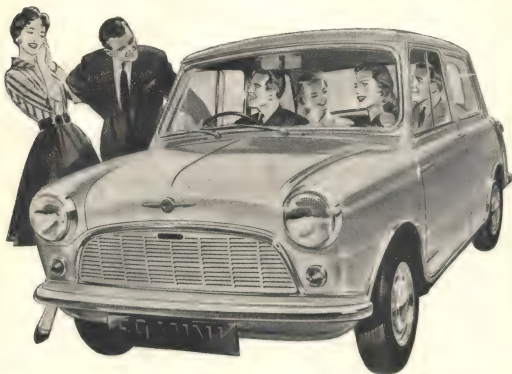
Salisbury, Rhodesia, now has its own branch, and its secretary, Brother G. R. Reid, of "Myitnge," 43rd Avenue, Haig Park, Salisbury, N.W.21, would like to hear from Rhodesian brothers wanting to join the group.

Nearer home, Brother T. J. Shortall, of The Nurseries, Clontarid, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny, Eire, hopes to bring local brothers



These African children, happily at work, pose the question "Is industry the answer to juvenile delinquency?"

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together, and would be glad if they'd get in touch with him.

From Madras, India, Brother K. S. Shivander, of Kullunder Road, reports plans for the early formation of a club in that area, and invites help from other Indian members.

WATCH THE BIRDIE

"How can I get my budgerigar to talk?" asks Brother Ronald King, of Horsham, Sussex, whose letter was one of more than fifty prompted by Brother Howard Gibbons' story of Billy the Budgie, which appeared in our last issue.

We know of no set formula for making a reluctant budgie speak the Queen's English, but more than one expert suggests that the pet should be subjected to a campaign of "repetitive phrases" until it mimics its master—or answers him back out of sheer exasperation!

One writer contends that, to make a bird speak, it should be kept away from the female of its species. He claims that when a cock and hen budgie live in the same cage, the lady spends so much time nagging her mate in their own language, that neither of them ever get around to speaking in any other.

Brother Rex Miller, of Bristol, writes:

"Billy must surely be the first non-human member of the Brotherhood, so please let's have a picture of him." This plea has been forwarded to Brother Gibbons.

THANKS, CANUCKS!

Brother S. Nicholson, of Holmdene Avenue, London, S.E.24, wishes to express, through these columns, his sincere gratitude for the courtesy and hospitality accorded him during his recent visit to Canada. He writes:

"Never before have I been shown such kindness and consideration. In Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and Vancouver, I had but to mention 'the Old Country' to find myself showered with offers of a home during my stay. Such generosity is a fine example of the real meaning of brotherhood."

WILL YOU CLICK?

Popular WIDE WORLD contributor William Fleming, who is leaving currently on a diamond expedition to the Pakaraima Mountains of British Guiana, is looking for a camera-enthusiast partner for his project. Those interested are invited to write to him c/o Anthony McLaughlin at 2, Searisbrick Road, Levenshulme, Manchester, 19.

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Travellers Tales

He Paid for His Drink

"I'm dying for a drink!" he croaked. "Will you give me a long beer for six stamps, Mr. Bradshaw?"

"Oh all right," agreed the publican distastefully, "then clear out before someone sees you and feels ill."

He handed over the beer, which Billy quaffed as if badly needing. Putting down the glass with a long-drawn sigh, he gaped at the expectant publican. Then he solemnly proceeded to stamp on the floor with his heel, calling "One! Two! Three! Four! Fi—"

By then the publican was leaping over the bar, but Billy had already reached the door.

That is one of many breezy anecdotes to be found in Ion L. Idriess's "Back O' Cairns" (Angus & Robertson, 18s). But it contains also much absorbing detail about the days when North Queensland was being opened up, when prospectors, mines and railways were spreading across the virgin wilderness. A fascinating book about pioneering days.

Beauty on the Sea

From my station on the mid-ship deck I was able to watch the behaviour of sailors, stevedores, and dock labourers as we passed



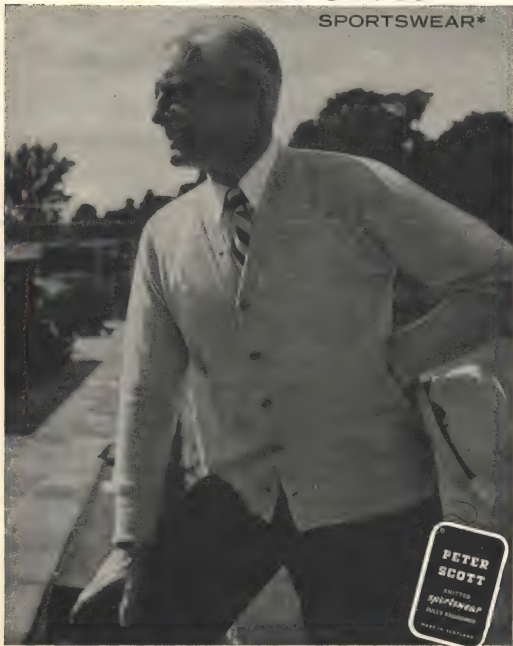
"Carina is one of the bravest boats ever to sail the Seven Seas. She is the only vessel that has won two transatlantic races and two Fastnet races in a row. Here we see her driven to the utmost under a glorious cloud of sail." So writes Uffa Fox in his latest book, "Sailing Boats" (Newnes, 17s. 6d.). The subject matter, as the title implies, is comprehensive, and it is written in the clear, racy, informative style we have come to associate with this most famous of yachtsmen.



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them in the *Mathew Scoble* and I was satisfied by their reactions to us that I had after all taken the right decision in joining her. . . .

Men on the wharves downed tools, stopped work. Crane drivers bent out of their cabs, bales hanging. Winchmen on the steamers, their hands on the steam valve, ignored their cargo handlers and gazed from behind hatch coamings. Firemen and greasers came out of the stokehold, the engine-room, stood gaping on gratings; painters on the stages overside turned their heads, turned round; captains came out of their day-cabins; officers ceased their pacing and came into the wings of their bridges; cooks poked out of galleys, tall hats leaning, and stewards left off fiddling with invoices.

. . . Like all aged things that have become almost an institution, she stimulated a flood of reminiscence.

"I was with 'er in Rio—" "Them ships is slave-drivers—" "Spoke 'er off the Azores in '20 when she'd run out of water!" "—in the Indian Ocean with a cargo of guano from Mauritius." "—seen 'er comin' down Channel" "—runnin' 'er eastin' down past Tristan da Cunha—Kerguelen." "—plague aboard. Put into Port Stanley—" A good ship—a dry ship—a wet ship—a killer. Under tops'ls—reefed fores'l—in chains—force 9—have to.

Such is the allure of the sailing ship—something that has been over-romanticised, no doubt, but nevertheless, in the form of the clipper ship, one of the most beautiful things man has ever created. The quotation above is from "In Deep" by Frank Baines (Eyre & Spottiswoode, 21s), which consists of fact told in fictional form. It is vivid, dramatic, sometimes shocking, and has always the authentic tang of the ocean.

Rustlings in the Night

During these nights everything remained absolutely still. The slightest sound, like the tapping of the horny head of a termite against dried leaves, was enormously amplified. If one got too close to them, these insects attacked and nothing could make them loose their grip. It was easy to see how the natives had come to use these animal pincers as ligatures for wounds. A brief rustling in the undergrowth betrayed the presence of a large whip-scorpion, stalking its prey under the cover of darkness. Instead of the normal dreaded sting, this curious creature had a long, thin whip at the end of its body. To defend itself it ejects a stream of strong-smelling liquid. With its tail aloft and its strong claws open and ready to attack, the animal fled swiftly out of the bright circle of light from my torch.

During these night hours the agile myriapod could occasionally be seen, with its sideways, flitting gait and its feelers, as thin as a hair, seven times as long as its body. On rare occasions we heard the wooden tappings of the night hawk. And to crown it all the ill-omened sari, the striped cuckoo, would chip in with its monotonous two-note call—ill omened because in folk-lore it is said to be an evil spirit. So the nights slipped by, without sleep for man or beast; and in the morning we

She's all yours!



'This is it! Solo for the first time. Start with cockpit checks—instruments, oil pressure, take-off trim. Good. Brakes off . . . a quick look round . . . full throttle.'



'Keep her straight. Ah—not so bumpy, nose wheel is off the ground. Faster . . . faster . . . gently back with the stick . . . up and away in a steady climb.'



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'Not bad . . . not bad at all. A little wide on the approach, but a smooth enough touch-down. And my best take-off yet. Hope my instructor was watching.'

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Stratton
ENGLAND
MEN'S JEWELLERY

crept out of our hammocks feeling just as weary as when we had crawled into them the night before.

The author of those words is Helmut Sick, and his book, "Tukani" (Burke, 25s). He was a member of a scientific expedition which spent several years in Central Brazil. He has a fine descriptive style and although a naturalist through and through, is also an author with a gift for vivid and dramatic writing who has produced a first rate book.

Lonely Men

In 1891 Douglas, working alone, made a magnificent expedition up the Waikatoto river, and ascended the low peak of Mount Ragan. The last 2,000 feet he climbed on his bare feet—"it was the grandest piece of climbing I ever did." His diary for the expedition is more detailed than usual, probably because he had many wet days in which to add his comments on life in general. They are not as bitter as one would expect from a lonely man draped in a blanket, waiting for his only set of clothes to dry. . . .

Occasionally his homelessness comes to the surface—"here I am after thirty years of wandering crouched under a few yards of calico with the rain pouring and the wind and thunder roaring among the mountains, a homeless friendless vagabond with a past that looks dreary and a future still more so. Still, I can't regret having followed such a life and I know that even if I and thousands beside me perish miserably, the impulse which impels us to search the wild places of the earth is good—a small grain of knowledge is cheaply purchased at the expense of a thousand ordinary lives."

That description, quoted from "The Exploration of New Zealand" by W. G. McClymont (Oxford University Press, 21s) could probably be applied to many an explorer in the pre-wireless-jeep-plane age. They were often lonely men whose only reward for incredible hardship was the satisfaction they gained from their achievements. Many such men are referred to in this comprehensive book.

Other Books Received

"SEQUEL TO BOLDNESS" by Richard Pape (Odhams, 18s). In which the author describes wartime experiences not covered in his "Boldness Be My Friend" and continues the story into more recent times.

"NINE LIVES" by Group Captain A. C. Deere (Hodder & Stoughton, 15s). The aerial adventures of a famous fighter pilot—who was, indeed, one of the few to whom Britain owed so much.

"THE BLACK PANTHER OF SIVANIPALLI," by Kenneth Anderson (Allen & Unwin, 16s.). More dramatic adventures of a celebrated hunter of man-eaters.

"THE WILDEST GAME," by Peter Ryhiner (Cassell, 21s.). The author is a man who hunts wild creatures without a gun and his quarries range from gorillas and snakes to butterflies and pandas. Wild animal stories at their best.

"BEATING ABOUT THE BUSH," by Jean Montgomery (Herbert Jenkins, 15s.). The author married a Canadian and found herself in the primitive Northland acting as camp cook for a group of men. That was just the start of her amusing adventures.

"THE ROAD TO ANKOR," by Christopher Pym (Robert Hale, 18s.). A journey—mostly on foot—through the dangerous—politically as well as physically—Indo-China "back country."

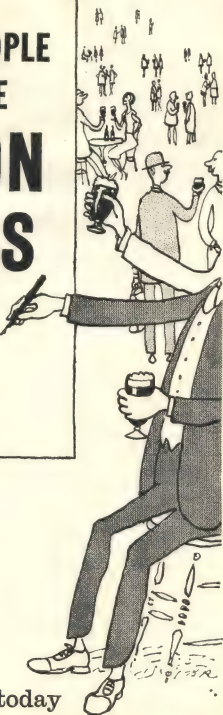
"MAN-EATERS AND MEMORIES," by J. E. Carrington Turner (Robert Hale, 18s.). The memories are not all of man-eaters, but of law-breaking villagers and such unfamiliar creatures as sloth bears. Humour as well as excitement.

"THE FLIGHT OF THE SMALL WORLD," by Arnold Eiloart and Peter Elstob. (Hodder & Stoughton, 16s.). The story of the attempt to cross the Atlantic by balloon and of the completion of the journey by water.

T. H

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MAN and HIS NEEDS

By "THE CAPTAIN"

OFF THE SPOT

A NEW do-it-yourself dry-cleaning product, mainly for removing stain spots, is well worth trying out. It is in the form of a tube-contained jelly.

The jelly is applied direct to the stain, and no use of a pad or hard rubbing is needed. The jelly dissolves the stain, and in a very short time—a matter of seconds—it changes into a powder which can be easily brushed off.

The jelly cleaner is non-inflammable, and will not leave its own ring mark after use; nor will it spread the stain effect.

It is intended for use on stains in woollen goods, most fabrics, and-upholstery materials. There are, of course, stains of many kinds, and even the most experienced dry-cleaning firms cannot deal with some of these with much success. And no home-use product of this kind can be expected to have a complete range of stain-removing effectiveness, nor is any such miraculous material likely to arrive; but the effective range of this new cleaner, "Solvex," is good, and at only 1s. 9d. a tube it is surely worth keeping in the house or office.

A LINE ON CLOTHES POSTS

The family man will not regard the garden clothes post as an item outside masculine interest. He may play no useful part in the chores of clothes washing, but if anything is wrong with the post for the drying line, it is inevitably his task to put it right.

Regal reflections at Flatford, Suffolk, immortalized by the painting of John Constable, this year enjoyed the attention of the cameras of a record number of tourists.

A newly-designed post seems likely to put an end to most of these troubles. I write this in the light of some experience, for it is not many months ago that our own conventional wooden post fell during the night, damaging some of the vegetable crop, and narrowly missing the greenhouse.

The new post is made from welded steel tube, with height adjustments secured by the telescopic principle. When collapsed, it is only 4½ feet high, and when extended, 7½ feet high.

A holding socket can be inserted into the ground, and this is easily movable from one garden site to another, if necessary. A spring-loaded catch holds the inner tube in position when the post is at its full height, and release of the catch allows the inner tube to retract into the lower tube, and this action is checked by a rubber sleeve housed inside the lower tube.

Fitted to the post is a handle that incorporates a cleat for fixing the line. The post, finished in a green gloss paint, costs 40s. complete. It is made by an engineering firm specialising in tubular products. Ask for the Portel telescopic clothes post—or write to me for the name of the manufacturers.

HOSE-RY!

Perhaps it is a little late to recommend to gardeners a device for joining lengths of plastic hose, but it may still be topical enough for hose users for car or yard washing down.

However, this is an efficient and new product deserving praise, even out-of-season. It is a plastic union composed of three parts, two of

which screw on at each end to the central section. The ends of the two hosepieces to be joined are pushed into each of the two outer parts of the joint, and these are then screwed on to the central section. This provides a leak-proof joint.

The "washers" that eliminate dripping, the usual trouble with any method of hose linkage, are internal springs. The pressure of screwing brings these circular springs into a firm, gripping action upon the hose ends.

Should readers have any difficulty in purchasing products mentioned in these columns, I shall be pleased to pass on the names of manufacturers or their sales agents.

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There are no loose parts and the device, being plastic, is rust-proof.

Unless rubber hose is thin-walled, this new hose union will not be effective with it; it is designed mainly for use with modern plastic hose. Called the Hozelock, it sells at 2s. 11d. and I have not previously come across an easier and more efficient hose-joining method.

FLOOR LEVEL

A well-known firm which for some time has been marketing do-it-yourself tiles for walls, has now brought out floor tiles that are also self-adhesive. These are made of very robust vinyl plastic, and I would place their resilience first among their several good features.

A floor tiled with them will not be hard or cold; also, the tiles, when laid, will mould themselves to any minor imperfections of floor level.

The backs of the tiles have a peel-off, trans-



parent film protecting the adhesive; the tiles must be immersed in water for about 30 seconds, and then the protective film can be readily removed. Pressure on the face of the tile, when in position, brings about an almost immediate fixing.

The tiles can be cut with scissors to fit awkward corners, though it is essential to do all cutting before the protective film is removed. Sixteen tiles cover one square yard, and they cost 1s. 9d. per tile.

They are available in 17 mottled colours, and the colour is not a surface effect that will wear off—it goes right through the tile. They can be laid on most kinds of floor, including existing linoleum surfaces.

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Concrete floors, being porous, should be given a special preparation wash, 24 hours before tiling, and the wash fluid costs 6s. 6d. per quart, this amount being sufficient to cover a floor area of about six square yards.

Wax polish should be removed from a wooden floor before trying to fix these tiles; this can be done with detergents.

The final effect of these do-it-yourself tiles is extremely good—a long-lasting floor surface of really “high-cost” appearance is obtained. I can recommend them without any hesitation. Ask for Porosan Self-Adhesive Plastic Floor Tiles.

METALLIC

A new product for repairing metal goods is a plastic paste containing 80 per cent. steel. It can be applied in paste form to holes or other defects, and in about two hours it sets hard.

The application can be made very simply; for example, it can be spread on a damaged spot with an old table knife.

Two “do-it-yourself” kits are sold at 9s. 9d. and 19s. 6d. The smaller kit contains one jar of the plastic steel and a phial of the hardening additive. The larger kit is simply a double supply.

Before use the hardener must be well mixed with the plastic steel. Most shops are stocking this product—Devcon Plastic Steel.

SHOE AID

A leather softening liquid may be useful for making a tight-fitting shoe more comfortable. I think this is more often a feminine problem than a male one, men, I am sure, being more careful than women about ensuring a comfortable fit when buying shoes.

However all of us, at one time or another, get a shoe that is tight at one particular spot, and the result is usually painful. Time and wear sometimes soften the leather, and enable it to mould itself to the shape of the foot, and this liquid preparation assists the process, for it has the effect of expanding the cells of the leather. It is applied with cotton wool by dabbing it freely on the troublesome spots, and the softening effect is very rapid in action.

The liquid is harmless to leather and will not have any irritant effect on the skin. A bottle costs 4s. 11d. The name is “Shoe-Eze,” and the manufacturers give a guarantee to refund the price if, when used according to directions, the liquid is unsuccessful.

HOW LONG IS A DAY?

So many scientific developments are startling that we can believe almost anything nowadays; however, the kind of scientific result that always staggers me most is the calculation that something is so many hundreds of thousands years old, or that something is so many million miles out in space.

Typical of this is a new view of the length of a day. 24 hours? Not to the scientists



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who study this sort of thing. The day is getting longer, at the rate of about one hundred-thousandth of a second every year! That is what is shown when the length of a day is measured by two successive transits of the sun.

A day now is two-hundredths of a second longer than a day 2,000 years ago. The reason given by scientists is that the earth's rotation is gradually slowing down, so that it now takes longer for any precise spot on the earth's surface to line up twice with the same solar or star measuring point.

Why the earth's rotation is slowing down is without explanation. Over a century ago Halley, the famous astronomer, was suspicious that day-length had changed, for he found that dates for eclipses did not agree with those indicated in early Greek and Babylonian times.

So there it is—if you're a tireless executive who is always wishing the working day could be longer, the truth is that it always is a little longer than yesterday.

All we need now is for some other scientist to show us how to make use of that extra hundred-thousandth of a second!

FENCING

One of the snags with wire netting or chain link fencing is its limited life. Every tennis club knows that a considerable-sized bill for renewal has to be faced every so many years, for atmospheric corrosion inevitably takes its steady toll and eventually the wire strands start crumbling. Even if bad areas can be tidily patched, the actual work of repairs puts a strain on other parts of the fence that are also weak.

A fairly new development for chain link fencing is the use of plastic covered wire. This sounds expensive, but in fact the cost of chain link fencing of this kind is not very much higher than that of galvanised fencing of similar weight. Its life is considerably longer, through the protection against damp and other atmospheric attack that is afforded by the plastic cover.

Any reader considering refencing a garden, or renewing netting around a tennis court or similar enclosure, should consider this plastic covered fencing. In addition to other recommendations its appearance is very attractive.

TEN-YEAR LIGHTS?

Most people have heard about the perpetual match that can be struck over and over again. Whether it was ever invented is one of those unsolved mysteries, but the conversational legend is that the invention was bought by concerns to whom it would have been dangerously competitive.

I'm inclined to regard it as a dramatic piece of fiction. What is not fiction, however, is a new British invention, a light that will work for up to 10 or 12 years without any power supply. I'd better say at once that this will not reduce your electricity bills—not at present anyway.

The first lamps made are only about twice

Emergency call!

He's 25, and it's 2 a.m., and he's just been called out of bed to go and cope with a cable fault that's cut off supply. He's needed urgently to isolate a section of the mains and organise repairs to it. Tough on him? Well, responsibility at an early age was one reason he joined the Electricity Supply Industry. He came straight from school and qualified while training. He likes the idea of playing a really important part in keeping a vital public service going, and he's getting ahead fast.

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the size of a matchstick. At the head is a glass bubble—the stem is a thin glass tube. In the stem, radioactive gas is held, and rays from this constantly hit the phosphors coated upon the glass head, keeping it glowing with light. This will go on for ten years or more.

The present small and experimental "lamps" can be used only for indicator lights, but when larger ones are made, they are likely to be employed as markers for buoys or warning lights on road obstructions.

A snag may be to find ways of turning the perpetual light off, but probably this could be done by having a "black-out" mask to slide over the head of the lamp.

A British firm is behind this—British Associated Electrical Industries of Leicester, but please don't ask me how much they sell at, or how to get one. This is the shape of things to come, not of things already on the market.

POCKET MAPS

The trouble with maps is that they are bulky to handle, if made in readily-readable scale sizes. I'm sure that every walker, using the standard inch-to-the-mile scale, has had to contend with this bother on a windy day!



Road maps can safely be smaller in scale, but, when cut down to pocket-sized sheets, they need a multiplicity of sections.

A very good idea, capable of extension, is a new map-wallet containing a road map of Great Britain, in sixteen sheets; this includes a plan of London.

The map shows all "A" class roads, and indicates inter-town mileages.

This can be offered as a practical proposition even with so small a number of sections, because a magnifier is fitted in the tongue of the wallet holding the maps. If the scale might otherwise be hard on the eyes, the magnifier puts this right.

The new map is on sale as the Elk "Mini-Atlas," and it costs as little as 5s. There surely must be a big field for other kinds of mini-maps produced in this way.

KEY PEOPLE

This is an item that will interest only those readers who have a key problem in the business, or some other organisation with which they may be connected. However, it seems too useful an idea to pass by just because it may have only limited interest.

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keys for various doors, etc., there is a key-control problem. Irritation and sometimes chaos reigns when the one or two people, who know which keys are which, are out, or away ill. Key organization is the sort of thing that everybody takes for granted—until the system breaks down.

A Midlands firm has introduced a simple and attractive system for key filing—coloured caps that fit on to the handle of keys, and which also carry numbers.

These coloured caps are expanding, and will fit all the usual kinds of lever and cylinder lock keys. Each has a pocket into which a number-carrying coloured card can be easily slipped. This enables the main or master set of keys to be housed in a cabinet or hung upon a wall panel.

This offers systemization at a glance, and should suit such multi-roomed buildings as offices, factories, institutes, blocks of flats, hotels, etc.

A minor additional feature is that each cap has a beak-shaped indicator on one side—and if the caps are put on accordingly, this indicates the right way up for insertion of the key into the lock, a particularly helpful feature for Yale type keys.

This new key control system seems worth looking into, if you have a sizeable key problem.

LIVING LONGER ?

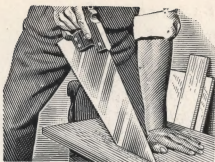
For some years now doctors and medical research people have been studying the general process by which man passes from middle age into old age. I'm sure there is a lot of sense in this. What counts so much is fitness in old age, ability to cope and not become increasingly reliant on others.

An American doctor who is a member of the U.S. Medical Association's Committee on Ageing, has stated this ten-point programme for older people's basic needs.

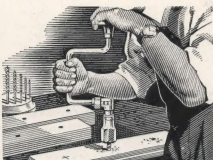
- (1) Balanced diet, with more protein, vitamins and fluids, but less fats and starchy foods.
- (2) Regular elimination of waste products.
- (3) Adequate rest of mind and body.
- (4) Interesting recreational activities.
- (5) Avoidance of emotional tensions.
- (6) A sense of humour, which is the best antidote to tension.
- (7) Mutual loyalty of friends and family.
- (8) Pride in work.
- (9) Participation in community affairs.
- (10) Continued expansion of knowledge and experience.

All communications for this department should be addressed to "The Captain," c/o THE WIDE WORLD MAGAZINE, Tower House, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2. Please enclose stamp if reply is required.

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